





# Someone Special

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## Prologue - Matsuo's Request

**(A/N from when I'm writing Volume 4 Chapter 4: Sorry if my writing is bad for the first few chapters. I've edited a few parts but I don't think it's satisfactory.)**

After waking up late, I walked down the stairs of Matsuo's mansion and into the kitchen. While looking for some cereal and juice, I sense someone behind me.

"Good morning, Kiyotaka-sama. After you finish your food, please come to the living room. We need to discuss something important."

It was Matsuo, the man who has been looking after me while the White Room is on a break.

I simply nodded and sat down to eat. Although cereal isn't the best option if you want to maintain a healthy diet, I burn off most of the calories with my daily fitness regimen.

After eating, I head over to the living room as requested. Matsuo and Niharu have already arrived, discussing something while sitting on a couch.

"Kiyotaka? You're gonna wanna see this." Niharu, as carefree as ever, points a folder in Matsuo's hands. Matsuo approaches me, and with a bow, hands me the papers.

"Advanced Nurturing High School?" The papers were enrollment documents for some government school.

"Yes, Kiyotaka-sama. I don't know the exact conditions you were put under during your childhood, but I'm aware that nobody deserves to grow up in that place." Matsuo then gestures towards the documents.

"Those papers are your chance to leave the facility. The school has enough power to keep your father away, so it guarantees three years of freedom."

Freedom, huh?

I glanced at Niharu, and she just nods. I turn back to Matsuo.

"Do you know what this means for you? If my father finds out you did this, he won't forgive you."

He sighs sadly.

"I know the consequences. But if I didn't give you the chance of a normal life, I would regret it for the rest of my days," he shows his resolve.

"Cmon Kiyotaka, I already signed the papers. It would be way

better if you were there too," Niharu says.

I sigh. "If you agreed already, then I have no reason not to either."

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**That's the prologue finished. I know it's short, but I wanna get to the school scenes quickly.**

**English is my second language, so sorry If anything seems unnatural or incorrect.**

# Volume 1 Chapter 1 - The Bus

Back in that place, I never failed a single task. In fact, I never failed to absolutely ace it and crush all of the competition, hence the title "masterpiece". However, there was a single person who I never thoroughly beat. Yes, I was superior in abilities, but I couldn't help but respect them for keeping up.

That person is Niharu. The one person I don't view as a pawn, but as a reliable ally and friend. The old me would have laughed at that if I showed much emotion, but it's true, and it feels great to have someone you can trust more than yourself.

Back in that place, we were allowed minimal interaction with the other test subjects. But that changed after me and Niharu were then the last ones left in our generation. They left us in the same room to sleep in and taught us how to interact socially with others. It was decided that we would rule Japan together, so teamwork between us soon became a common aspect in our education. Combining that with the time in Matsuo's place, we became an inseparable pair.

I glance at her. She's fast asleep, with her head rested on my left shoulder. There aren't any romantic feelings between us, just trust. We could sleep in the same bed with no ulterior motive if we feel like it.

"Sir, you're sitting on a priority seat. Is it ok if you offer it up to this old lady?" My thoughts are interrupted.

"I'm sorry young lady, but although this is priority seating, I have no legal obligation to stand." A boy, no, a young man with dyed blond hair and a large build was causing a scene at the front of the bus.

"Why should I give the seat to this old lady?" They keep arguing for a few minutes. The man isn't even looking at who he's talking too, with his arms and legs crossed. At this point, Niharu has woken up.

They didn't show any sign of stopping, so I went to stand up and offer my seat. But as I tried to stand, Niharu grabbed my arm.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm going to offer my seat to the lady so they can stop arguing." She forcefully pulled me back into the seat.

"Don't."

"Why not?"

"I'd rather sit next to you than some old hag. Just wait until someone else offers their seat."

I sigh and sit down again, but my movement wasn't unnoticed by the girl helping the lady.

"Are you offering your seat to the old lady?" She asked. Feeling an intense glare from beside me, I decide to lie.

"Sorry, but I feel a bit sick right now. I can't." My reply was perfect. It's a lie that is easy to see through but the girl can't press further without seeming rude.

As I expected, she just nods and focuses on the rest of the bus.

"Does anyone want to-" She gets interrupted by a booming laugh.

"To think the two of you would be in a place like this. So the lab rats escaped, huh?" The young man had turned his attention to me and Niharu.

Niharu's usually relaxed facial expression had changed to one of shock. He was wearing the same uniform as us. How does a high school student know about that place? He called us lab rats, so he can't be from there as well. Maybe he's the son of an investor?

The rest of the bus was staring at him and us in confusion. Everyone forgot about the bus seat and the old lady.

"What do you mean?" I decide to feign ignorance to see if he would give us more information.

"Don't play dumb with me, boy. I was watching from behind the glass." With that, he promptly turned around again, losing all interest in his surroundings.

At least he confirmed my suspicions. His parent must have been major contributors to that place if their son was allowed to go inside.

This school might be more interesting than I thought.

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**I promise the chapters will get longer, I just don't feel like writing the equality monologue and all of Kouenji's argument. This chapter was mainly to show how close Kiyoko and Niharu are.**

## Volume 1 Chapter 2 - The Entance Ceremony

Niharu and I stepped off the bus, deep in thought. As we were walking up the steps onto the main campus, a voice called out to me.

"Hey," It was a girl with long black hair standing in front of us.

"Why were you looking at me?"

"Oh, you were the girl on the bus. I was just wondering why you didn't offer up your seat to that young lady."

"I decided not to on a matter of principle. If that's all then I'll be going now." She turns around to leave. Then as if she just thought of something, she turns around again.

"Actually I have a question. What was that arrogant boy talking about when he mentioned you two?" She glared at us suspiciously. I don't even know what we did to earn it. At this point Niharu stepped in.

"That guy was just spitting nonsense, or maybe he got us mixed up with someone else. We have no idea what he meant." Without waiting for a reply, she pulled me by the hand away from the girl.

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The entrance ceremony went off without a hitch, though it was incredibly boring. My classmates were extremely restless and talkative, and nobody intervened, although some of the other classes were glaring at us.

We stepped into the classroom later than expected, but we were still on time, so the classroom was already more than half full, and groups were already starting to form. A few people glanced at Niharu and I as we entered, including the girl we who helped the old lady on the bus. She quickly removed herself from the large group surrounding her desk to greet us.

"Hi, my names Kushida Kikyou. You two were on the same bus as me, right?"

Niharu glanced at me, and I just shrugged.

"I'm Hasegawa Niharu, It's a pleasure," she replied shortly.

"Nice to meet you, Hasegawa-san! You look really pretty, you know," she said cheerfully.

She then looks at me expectantly.



"My name is Ayanokouji Kiyotaka. I guess we'll be classmates from now on."

**(A/N Kiyo is better at communicating because of the White Room's social exercises and time with Niharu)**

"Oh, I remember now! Are you sure you're sick? You look pretty healthy to me." She nudged me to show she's just teasing.

"Erm, sorry about that. Someone forced me to stay in my seat," I said, turning around to Niharu.

"Haha, don't worry about it. I saw why she didn't want you to leave." She exaggerating raised her eyebrows. She must be referring to when she was leaning on me while asleep.

"So you guys know each other from before here?"

"Yeah. We grew up in the same neighborhood."

We chatted for a few more minutes before excusing our selves and going to our desks. In the application form, Matsuo asked for us to be seated next to each other in Class D, which was accepted by the chairman. I guess that place's influence is pretty vast.

My seat was situated in the back left corner, next to the window. Niharu's spot was to the direct right of mine.

"So what do you think so far, Kiyotaka?"

"School hasn't even started yet. Let's just wait until school is over before discussing it."

"Hmph. I was just trying to start a conversation."

Just then, a sigh could be heard on the other side of Niharu.

"What an unfortunate coincidence." It was the stuck-up girl who stopped us back on the steps. She didn't seem to like us for some reason.

"Well if you do want an opinion, I think the classroom is pretty well equipped," I told Niharu, completely ignoring the other girls existence. Niharu giggled at the disgruntled look on her face.

"Hey, whe-"

"Yeah, I agree. I guess the schools prestige isn't for nothing."

The girl just frowned and brang a book out of her bag. Before she started to read it, he looked at the front of the room and frowned even more. I followed her line of sight and saw the young man on the bus enter the classroom, ignoring Kushida's attempt at an introduction, and propped his legs on top of his desk, ignoring his surroundings. He really was in his own world.

"Sorry for ignoring you. My name is Hasegawa Niharu." I turn my attention back to the girls. It looks like Niharu is trying to start a conversation with the other girl.

"If possible, I'll decline your introduction." She opens the book and starts reading. I dont think she appreciates being ignored.

"Cmon, you're going to be my seatmate this year so you can at

least say your name," Niharu pestered her.

She sighed.

"Horikita," she said without bothering to look up from her book.

"Now please stop bothering me."

Niharu shot an amused look my way.

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A few minutes later, the door opened and a young woman came walked up to the podium, with her high heels clacking all the way. The class silenced itself and turned to the front.

"I'm Chabashira Sae, your homeroom and Japanese history teacher. In this school, classes usually dont swap students, so you will be my class for the next three years."

The class starts murmuring. Apparently that is unusual for a high school.

"I will now hand out your student ID cards. By using your card, you can access any facilities or purchase any goods from stores. Basically it's like I credit card. However, its important that you pay attention to how many points you spend. At this school, you can but anything with points. You simply swipe the card through scanner to complete a transaction.

Points are deposited to your account every month. If you check your balance now, you should already have 100,000. Each point is worth 1 yen."

There was a moment of silence, before the class went into chaos. People were yelling in disbelief and excitement for a whole minute without showing signs of slowing down. Niharu and I exchanged a knowing glance. We both noticed the strange way the explanation was worded.

"The school Evaluates students talents. By passing the entrance exam, you have already proven some of your worth. The amount you have received reflects the evaluation of you're worth-"

Niharu and I exchange another glance. Were they even hiding it? We clearly won't recieve 100,000 points next month.

"Should we warn them?"

"Nah."

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**I think I'm happy with this chapter. The explanation is just a short version of the LN.**

**Next chapter will start with the introductions. Since Kiyotaka is more socially experienced, his one should be smooth.**

**What should Niharu look like?**

## Volume 1 Chapter 3 - Class 1-D

After Chabashira-sensei finished up the explanation of the S-System, we were given a free period to do what we want. A boy with brown hair near the front of the class stood up.

"Ok, since we are going to be in the same class for the next few years, we should get to know each other. Let's introduce ourselves while we have the chance."

After everyone agreed, He introduced himself as Hirata Yousuke. He seemed to be nice guy. After a few more introductions it was Kushida's turn.

"My name is Kushida Kikyou. None of my friends from junior high made it to this school, so I'm alone here. I'd like to get to know all of your names and faces right away and become friends as soon as possible! My first goal is to become friends with everyone. So, after we're finished with introductions, I'd love for you to share your contact information with me!"

Wow. Most of the class is looking at her with stars in her eyes. I could already tell she was going to be popular based on our interactions, but she basically captured the heart of the class with a couple sentences.

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Eventually it was my turn. The class turned their attention to me as I stood up.

"Hey everybody, my name is Ayanokouji Kiyotaka. I'm not that interesting but I guess I'm pretty athletic. I'm looking forward to getting to know all of you." I sat down. It was nowhere near as good as Kushida's, of course, but it was hard to find any faults with it.

"Thanks, Ayanokouji-kun. We all look forward to it too." Hirata gave an exemplary response.

I nudged Niharu, who was zoned out from her surroundings.

"Niharu, your turn."

"Wha-? Oh- yeah. My name is Hasegawa Niharu. Nice to meet you all, I guess," she said while twirling a lock of hair with her finger.

"Umm Ayanokouji? That's your name right? Did you know this girl from before high school?" A boy named Ike asked me, eyeing me inquisitively.

"Yes,"

After I didn't elaborate everyone just turned their attention to Horikita. There was a moment of silence as she didn't look up from her book.

"Umm, would you like to introduce yourself?" Asked Hirata.

"There is no reason for me to do it, so I'll pass." She said with a sigh. I already thought she had a superiority complex from her attitude, but I didn't expect her to be unwilling to even introduce herself. I wonder how we got her last name.

"Her name is Horikita," Niharu said with a smirk. I guess she doesn't like Horikita much, not that I can blame her. Horikita's eyebrow twitched in annoyance.

"Why do you think you have the right to introduce me like that?" She asked, her voice as cold as ice. Niharu just pretended not to hear her, unaffected by the glare she was being sent.

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After the first day of school ended, Niharu and I walked out of class together to go to the convenience store.

"You asked for my opinion on the school earlier. I don't exactly know what a normal school is like, but I can tell this one isn't normal. From the point system to the hidden meaning behind all of its messages, I doubt many other schools have the same methods for education."

"Not that those hidden messages are hard for us to uncover! But yeah, I didn't expect a high school would go to such lengths," Niharu said light-heartedly.

"So what did the messages mean to you?" I asked. I wanted to know her thought process on the matter.

"Ahem. When she said the school gives us points based on our self worth, it obviously means that our behavior and skills deeply affect our monthly points. Onto you, partner."

She got it spot on so far, so I continued her statement.

"In the entrance ceremony, our classmates were behaving like a bunch of preschoolers, but nobody came to silence them. I think that things like talking in class will be permitted, but our income will be affected negatively from it," I nodded to her as if it's her turn to speak.

She smiled and continued.

"Class A and B seemed much more well behaved than ours, and their class letter is before ours in the alphabet. Is it a coincidence?" Her expression suggested she didn't believe it for a second.

"Remember the application forms Matsuo signed? He asked for us to be specifically put in Class D, so it's obvious that people are put into each class for a reason," I added.

Her eyes widened a bit.

"Wow. I came to the same conclusion, but I totally forgot about those application forms. How do you remember that from months ago?"

I just shrugged. This was a common occurrence for us. We both make separate theories about something, then combine them in the way you would tell a story. Sometimes one of us would miss a small detail, so we could come up with a more concise idea through our talks.

"The convenience store is just over there. Let's test out the student IDs." She nodded and we went inside.

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**Another chapter update with only 900 words, but it came 2 hours after the last one. Do you guys prefer that or 2 updates a week with longer chapters? I prefer how it is now.**

**This chapter mainly shows the difference between this Kiyo and the LN Kiyo, and also shows how in sync he is with Niharu.**

**Also sorry if the introductions were a but rushed.**

## Volume 1 Chapter 4 - The Dorms

We walked inside and started browsing around the store.

"Apparently these noodle cups are really good," Niharu said, examining an instant ramen cup with curiosity.

"Are they healthy? I think I should keep up a healthy diet before the age of 22," I picked one up and read the label. It has a 1.5 health star rating.

"Never mind, it's-" I turn around and see Niharu hoarding 5 of them while going to the soft drink section. I sighed. She was taking this freedom thing way too seriously. Or is it I seriously? My thoughts are interrupted by a voice behind me.

"Yo, dude! Are you from a different world or something?"

I turn around to a tall boy with red hair with his own cup cradled in his hands.

"Of course a ramen cup isn't healthy! And that girl said it was good as if she read it somewhere! Where have you been all this time?" He seems pretty passionate about his ramen cups.

"We grew up in very sheltered families. Our parents were strict with our diets." He paused before nodding and heading to the checkout without saying anything else. What a strange guy.

After getting some cooking ingredients, I waited outside for Niharu to finish her shopping spree for junk food.

"Oi, are you a first year? This is our spot." It looks like some upperclassmen were targeting the red haired boy.

"Yeah, so what about it, you bastard!?" Whoa. His fuse is way too short. He already looks like he wants to kill them.

"This is our spot, so get out of the way." The upperclassman sneered at him with contempt. He was obviously trying to rile the boy up, and it was working.

"What did you say?" He roared. At this point, his fists were clenched. I should probably step in.

I was about to call out to him when the senpai said something that caught my attention.

"This guy is in Class D. No doubt about it." He spat at the boy's feet. "Stupid defect."

That was enough for the boy to launch forward enraged, but-

"Hey! It's a trap. Don't fall for it." I finally called out. He paused, a couple steps from smashing his fist into the upperclassman's face.

"What do you mean? Even if it's a trap, I can take them all on at once," he said confidently. Judging from his build, it was certainly possible.

"That's not what I mean look over there," I point at the security camera. "If you attack first, they can blackmail you easily."

"Tch. Who are you, kouhai? Judging from your attitude, you must be in Class A or B."

I did a mental face palm. They were probably forbidden from telling us things about the school, but they had pretty much explained the class hierarchy without even realizing it.

"Whatever. Let's go, guys." With that, the three senpai walked away in a huff.

"Oi! Get back here!" The red haired boy asked to no avail. He just muttered something else and came walking over to me.

"Damn, you really saved me there. I had no idea they had security cameras around campus." His attitude had taken another 180. You could never tell that fifteen seconds earlier he was about to start a brawl.

"Yeah, no problem. In class today you didn't introduce yourself. What's your name?" After I helped him, he should respect me enough to tell me that much.

"Wait, your in my class? Eh, whatever. My names Sudou Ken."

"Thanks, I'm Ayanokouji Kiyotaka."

We shook hands and exchanged contact info before he left to "finish the noodles before they get cold."

Just then, Niharu came out of the store with 4 bags worth of chocolate and other junk food. The bags were straining from the weight of what it contained.

I sighed, and she just grinned guiltily.

"This is only happening once, I swear. I just couldn't help myself! I mean, who knew there could be so many flavors or ice cream?"

"Yeah yeah, I get it. Also, our theory of the classes is confirmed now. I'll explain as we go to my room."

"Can't I quickly drop off my snacks in my room first?"

"Ok. My room is number 401, so just meet me there."

"Ok!...Wait a minute." She pauses. "My room key says 401 as well. Aren't the dorms separated by gender?"

"They are. I'm guessing Matsuo requested that as well." There was no other explanation for it, and if the chairman accepted it, he must personally understand our situation and isn't just feeling threatened by that places influence.

"We can figure everything out later. See you later, Kiyotaka!"

She rushes ahead like a child, no doubt to taste all of the things she bought. Sometimes I wonder how i respect her so much.

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I texted Sudou, and he was on the 4th floor of the dorms like me, so if there was a mistake with the dorm rooms then it would be on Niharu's side. I see my dorm has already been unlocked, so her key actually worked on the door. A mistake seems less likely now.

I open the door to see Niharu sprawled on the couch, rubbing her stomach. Empty chocolate wrappers and soft drink cans littered the floor around her. For a genius, she makes some pretty dumb decisions.

"Care to explain?"

"I just want to clarify that I have no regrets,"

"You obviously do,"

"..."

I sigh and start picking up the rubbish.

"So we really are sharing a room, huh? There was no mistake?" I attempted to start a conversation.

She points into the kitchen.

"My dorm keys in the kitchen. Go check if they match."

I went and lined them up next to each other. They were identical.

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After all of our groceries were put away and the room was cleaned, I explained to her about the incident Sudou got himself involved in.

"So I guess it's exactly as we thought then. Class D is the lowest class with the least capable people?" She stated the obvious.

"Pretty much. I'm gonna make dinner now if you feel like helping."

"Haa, I'll pass for today. My body can't handle basic tasks right now." I expected that answer. She already ate half of the food she bought. Because of that, I'll make dinner a light soup with vegetables.

**(A/N I forgot to mention this earlier, but the White Room also added cooking to the syllabus along with social skills in this fic.)**

When I got to the kitchen, I realized I didn't have any of the equipment needed to make what I wanted, so we ended up eating cupped noodles instead.

After dinner, I decided to check out the rest of the dorm. The bathroom didn't seem to have anything unusual, but the bedroom had a large double bed, instead of the usual single-sized one. Did Matsuo do this? I can't really imagine him putting it into the application form.

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1K words, another short chapter. When the story starts getting into more important stuff then the chapters will become longer like some of you requested.

The next chap might take a while since I'm rereading the LNs.

No sex.

## Volume 1 Chapter 5 - The Second Day

I woke up and checked my phone. The time is 7 o'clock. School starts in one hour and Niharu was still snoring next to me. With a sigh, I tap her awake. She just starts rubbing her eyes sleepily.

"Why did you have to wake me up? That was the best sleep I've had in a wh-"

"School starts in an hour," I intervene. She doesn't react the way I hoped.

"So?" She looks at me blankly.

"So... let's get ready?"

"Ugh, just a little long-" I start tickling her. That should be enough to wake her up completely.

"Hah- Ok! OK!"

That should be enough.

"Was that necessary, Kiyotaka?"

"If I didn't do it, you would have slept until lunch, so yes. Let's get ready." I left the room before she could complain anymore to find something we can eat.

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We managed to leave the dorms at 7:45. Nobody saw us leaving the same room since almost everyone had already left. We entered the classroom less than a minute before Chabashira-sensei. She began to explain more of the school rules and policies and, soon enough, only a seven or eight students were listening. Sudou had even fallen asleep.

Niharu shared a knowing look with me. Just as we predicted, the actions of the class was completely ignored.

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hen lunch started, Hirata stood up.

"Does anyone wanna come to the cafeteria with me?" He asked.

I turn to Niharu. "This is our chance to talk to our classmates. Should we go?" She nodded and we stood up in unison.

"Oh! I'll go!"

"Yeah! Me too!"

Soon we had a group of seven ready to go. We all walked out of the classroom together, when someone called out from behind.

"Hey, Hasegawa-san? Ayanokouji-kun? Can I have a moment please?" Kushida walked over to us with a cheerful expression. I

signal to Hirata he can leave without us, which he pretends not to see, before walking with Niharu towards Kushida.

"Sorry for interrupting your plans with Hirata-kun! I just want to ask you guys something," she leads us into the corridor and turns around.

"Yesterday during the introductions, you knew Horikita's name. You see, she was the only one in the class who didn't give me her contact information, which kind of ruins my goal of making friends with everyone."

It seems like Horikita has kept her stance of not making any friends and denied Kushida's attempts. That girl's head-strong attitude isn't helping her at all. Kushida continues.

"Do you guys perhaps know her from before you came to this school?" Although everything Kushida did was friendly and inviting, I felt a strange pressure from her words.

"Nah, the only person I know from before that came here is Kiyotaka. I only know her name because she's my seatmate."

Kushida nodded slowly, contemplating something. Then she turns back to us with her typical cute smile.

"Okay! You might not know her from before, but can you still introduce me to her since your her friends? The only people she talks to is you guys,"

"Sorry, Kushida, but we barely know her. In fact, she probably hates us. If we try to help it will only make things worse." She looks down sadly after my blatant rejection.

"Are you guys sure you cant help?" She asks in a final attempt for our cooperation.

"Yes, I'm sure. It will only have adverse effects. Now if that's all, we dont want to keep Hirata waiting."

Niharu and I left Kushida to think in the hallway.

"Sorry for taking a while. You really didn't have time wait for us, you know?" Niharu says to Hirata once we returned to the group.

"Oh, don't worry about it. It wasn't an inconvenience at all." He politely replied. A girl standing behind him snorted at his words. I believe her name was Karuizawa?

"Well it was an inconvenience to me. Let's just not waste any more time." She started walking towards the cafeteria without sparing us a glance.

"Ah, sorry about her. She can be a bit blunt sometimes."

This lunch might be a bit troublesome.

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After lunch, there was an announcement for a student club fair happening at 5 PM. Niharu and I agreed to go check it out, and decide on a club afterwards.

"Hey, Ayanokouji!" After school ended, Sudou approached me with two other boys behind him.

"Are you gonna try out a club?"

Before I could answer, a boy named Ike interrupted.

"Wait, Sudou, you can't be thinking of inviting this guy?"

"I am. Is there a problem?"

"No. It's just-"

"Sure, I'll go with you guys. Is it ok if Niharu comes with us?" After hearing that, Ike started to smile excitedly instead.

"Oh, that's fine, that's fine! Of course you can come with us!" Most of the people listening in on the conversation shook their head.

"So, Hasegawa-chan, are you thinking of joining a club? Do you like sports? You look like you're good at them!" He said, staring at her body. Everyone had disgusted expressions. At this point he was digging his own grave without realizing it.

Niharu just smiled, pretending she wasn't bothered.

"To answer your questions, yes, I enjoy sports. I'm thinking of joining the same club as Kiyotaka." She said, standing up to leave.

Ike frowned a bit from that answer, but didn't stop chatting with her until we reached the dorms. Since Ike and the other boy Yamuchi were visiting Sudou's room, we all got off on the same floor.

"Ok, we'll see you guys at the fair in half an hour," I bade them farewell in front of our room before stepping inside with Niharu.

"I'm sorry you had to go through that, Niharu. Let's not hang out with them next time."

Niharu just sighs. "I don't know how long I could go on for without punching that idiot in the jaw," she said with contempt.

"Do you think you can hold out during the club fair?"

She began to genuinely ponder about her answer. "Hmm. That's an interesting question. I honestly don't know the answer to that." Basically, Ike would have to be careful if he wants to survive until tomorrow.

After getting ready we met with the three boys in the lobby and started heading to the gymnasium.

"Hasegawa-chan! Over here!" Ah well. If anything happens to Ike here, it's entirely his fault.

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When we got to the gymnasium, there was already a crowd of students gathered, with everyone facing a podium. It seems the Student Council President is wrapping up his speech.

After he finished speaking, the crowd dispersed and started wondering around, looking for a suitable club to join.

"Alright, let's go. I'm thinking of joining the Basketball ack-"

Sudou started speaking but a girl pushed passed him in a hurry.

"Horikita?" We called out to her but she already disappeared into the crowd.

"The fuck is her problem? Well whatever, let's just go look at the clubs." Sudou didn't seem to think too deeply about it, but I was curious about her actions. During the speech, she had a conflicted look of her face.

"Ike and Yamauchi, are you two thinking of joining a club? I didn't take you guys as the athletic type."

They didn't seem to realize she was mocking them. "Nah, we're just here to accompany Sudou."

"Also, there is the chance of a fateful encounter!" Yamauchi added excitedly.

We tilted our heads in confusion, and they decided to change the topic.

"Anyway, Didn't you say you were joining a club with Ayanokouji, Hasegawa-chan?"

"Yeah. Actually Kiyotaka and I should get going now. We need to find a club soon," She dragged me away from them by the arm,

"Okay. Just forget those two. I'm thinking of a joining fitness club," she said to me, her eyes darting from one stall to the next.

"In that case, let's join the soccer club. I heard Hirata was going to try it out and we can easily be the stars of the team," I suggested.

She shook her head slowly. "I dont feel like learning a bunch of new rules. How about the Track and Field Club? It looks as simple as it sounds,"

"Hm, well I dont have anything against it. Let's try it out," we walked over and signed our names down.

\*\*\*

"What a day," Niharu plopped herself on the bed next to me and covered her head with a pillow.

I turn to face her. "So should we hold back in everything? I got low scores on the entrance exam so I didn't stand out, but I kind of feel like going all out now."

She turned and stared at me. "Why would you hold back in the first place?"

I started to wonder that too. What was going through my head at the time? Surely a little attention wouldn't hurt. Showcasing my abilities would also help me make friends, which was one of my main goals for my three years here. Being inconspicuous would just be wasting the chance Matsuo gave us by enrolling us here. That's pretty bad considering he risked his life to do it.

"I don't know. Forget I said anything." I roll back over to go to sleep.

"Was I bothering you?" She asks, seemingly disgruntled that I turned my back to her.

"Your breath on my face was uncomfortable," I reply shortly.

"So it would be fine If I do this?" She asked, wrapping her arm around my chest and embracing me from behind.

"Do what you want, just let me go to sleep,"

---

**I said no sex.**

**At this point I'll just let you imagine what Niharu looks like. Also I just noticed these chapters are getting longer with each one I write.**

**If the fic gets enough support, I might adapt the entire COTE series.**

**This is enough for the first day. Goodnight for now everyone!**

**Unusual-meet1984, January 12, 1 fucking AM. I spend too much time writing.**

## Volume 1 Chapter 6 - A Glimpse of their Abilities

"Ah, Yamauchi, good morning,"

"Indeed, Ike. I can't wait for today's classes!" Everyone stopped what they were doing and look at them with suspicion. In only a few weeks, their reputations had plummeted into the depths of hell.

"What's so different about today's class?" Someone asked.

"Ahh, yes, that reminds me. I will set the plan into action today," Sotomura, also known as the professor, called out to them.

The glares of suspicion intensified after he said that.

"Swimming is the best!" Ike said without thinking. Some people connected the dots and uttered their disgust.

"Wait, what's happening?" Asked Sudou. Ike went and whispered something in his ear. Sudou's eyes widened.

"Hey, hey, don't you think that's too much?" At this point nobody bothered to berate him. He brang Sudou, and for some reason, me, over to his desk.

"So we're betting on the girl chest sized. Here are the odds so far," he whispered, bringing out a sheet with a list of names.

"Why am I here?" I asked.

"I can't decide between Hasegawa-chan or Kushida-chan for the highest odds. So I need you to help me before I make a decision. There are rumors that she leaves your dorm in the morning, and she went into your place before the club fair."

He looks at me seriously.

"I'll forgive you because you have known her longer than me-" He almost came close to showing maturity there. I'm honestly impressed.

"-but can you tell me her size? And don't tell her I asked this!" I should have known. Sotomura is looking at me with wide eyes.

"Is that all true, Ayanokouji-dono?"

I sighed.

"If you wanna know that sort of stuff, ask her yourself," I actually did know her size, since she got dressed in front of me a few times, but of course I'm not going to tell the likes of Ike anything.

I returned to my desk quickly and told Niharu what was happening.

She closes her eyes to calm herself down.

"Did you tell them anything?"

"Of course not,"

"Good,"

"...The swimming is optional, so you can just skip it,"

She sighed. "No. I shouldn't skip this. Remember what we talked about?"

"Okay, but don't force yourself."

She's referring to a conversation we had yesterday when swimming lessons were announced.

### **Flashback**

*"This is our chance, Kiyotaka,"*

*"What do you mean?" She glances at me.*

*"We can show to our classmates our true potential. Also, I want to see how fast I am now compared to when I was in that place. No holding back."*

*"I see."*

*"Hey, Ayanokouji-boy, Hasegawa-girl. I will be expecting a proper performance from you two tomorrow," Kouenji had gotten up from his seat and approached the back corner of the classroom.*

*The class was stunned. Not only did they not understand what he meant, but Kouenji speaking to others in class was a rare occurrence. Actually, this is probably the first time.*

*"Don't worry Kouenji. We'll give you what you want,"*

*He grinned and returned to his seat. I turn back to Niharu.*

*"Well, let's not disappoint him,"*

*"Un,"*

### **Flashback end**

\*\*\*

I left the changing room with a few of the boys salivating behind me. I just ignored them and walked over to the swimming teacher. More than half of the girls had decided not to participate after what Ike said this morning, much to his dismay.

I was curious to see how the girls race would go. Obviously, Niharu will come first, but out of the girls still left there seemed to be a few competent people. For example, Onodera Kayano joined the Swimming Club, so she has a good chance at taking second place. There was also Horikita, who claims to have superior physical abilities. Her complex can't just come from nothing.

Once everyone was gathered the teacher started speaking.

"Only seventeen of you, huh? Well, that's alright. We're just gonna start with a quick lap of the pool to see how well you can swim. But no matter if you can't, you should be able to swim before



summertime,"

"Do we really need to know how to swim? It's not like we're going to the beach or anything,"

"I don't mind if you can't swim right now, but it will definitely come in handy later,"

Niharu, who was standing next to me, nudges me and I nod in understanding. We haven't gotten any hidden messages from the school in a while. Swimming will come in handy later? So an event will come when we need to swim, perhaps like a race or sports festival.

We did some stretching, with Ike staring at the girls, before jumping into the pool to do a fifty meter lap.

"Well, it looks like you can all keep yourself afloat, at least."

"Of course, sir. Back in junior high, I was called the Flying Fish," Ike said boastfully.

"Hm, I see. Well in that case, you can compete. The girls will be split into to groups of five, and the five fastest boys can race each other. The first place winner gets 5000 points,"

I'm slightly surprised that points have been put on the line. Maybe it's to encourage the students?

Anyway, I sat next to Hirata and ignored all of the boys cheering.

"Ayanokouji-kun,"

"Hi, Hirata,"

We sat in silence and watched the girls race. The first race was dominated by Horikita with 28 seconds, which I think is impressive for a normal person.

The next race, however, caught my attention. The participants included Niharu, Onodera, and Kushida. When they dove into the water, the cheering stopped. Everyone watched in shocked silence as Niharu completed her lap. The boys even forgot about their ogling.

After it was over I walked over to Niharu.

"Nice j-"

"21.23 SECONDS?" A group quickly surrounded her and barraged her with questions. It seems she was close to breaking the national record.

"Hehe..." She couldn't keep up with it all.

"Alright everybody, um, calm down, the boys races will be starting now." The swimming teacher couldn't believe it either, but he decided to continue the lesson.

Sudou was the first one to swim. His form wasn't the best, but his strength made up for it as he completed it in 25.07 seconds. He got out of the water, muttering to himself, and occasionally glancing at Niharu. I guess he's shocked at the difference between them despite

Niharu being a girl.

Next was Hirata, getting an admirable 26.13 seconds, and Kouenji getting 23.45 seconds.

"I'm just saving my energy for the race," he claimed. Its easy to believe based on his figure, and the fact he wasn't even out of breath when he left the pool.

"So you think you can go faster than Hasegawa-chan?" It looks like Niharu has got a fan club now.

Before getting into my starting position, someone tapped me on the shoulder. It was Horikita.

"Do you need something?"

"Kouenji said he was expecting something from you and Hasegawa-san, and Hasegawa-san ended up faster than anyone else. Can I assume you are like her?"

"You'll see,"

A few people heard the conversation and started whispering. By the time I was in diving position, most of the class was watching intently. I was actually thinking of holding back after seeing how Niharu was crowded after her race, but now everyone's expectations were amounted on me, and it would be suspicious if I got an average score after what Kouenji said.

The whistle blew, and I dove into the water. There was a moment of silence before I reached the water, and then all I could here was water rushing past my body as I swam with everything I had. It felt great, being able to do this without it having to be a fight for survival. I was simply swimming fast because I felt like it. There was nothing more to it, no looming of danger, just leisure.

I got out of the pool and calmly walked over to the class.

"S-Sensei? What was his time..?"

"Ahem, oh, yes, right. Uh, it was..." his eyes widened.

"19.16 seconds,"

More silence.

Then a booming laugh could be heard from the back.

"Thank you, Ayanokouji-boy, I didn't expect you to care about your time," Kouenji was admiring himself with a hand mirror as he said this.

"Say, Kouenji-kun. How did you know Hasegawa-san and Ayanokouji-kun would be so fast?"

Horikita had been staring at me for a while, but she finally turned away and asked him that. Kouenji just kept admiring his hair.

\*\*\*

"What the fuck, Ayanokouji? You said you were decent at sports, the you break a fucking record? What's up with that?" Sudou and a few other people were surrounding my desk during lunch. I took my

bento from Niharu and turned to face them. I finally remember what I was thinking when I hid my talent during the entrance exam.

"What do you guys want to know? I was insanely fast at swimming, that's all there is to it. It's not like I have some secret technique."

"That might not be true, Ayanokouji-kun. I saw how perfect your form was there!" Onodera said. I guess nothing gets past her when it comes to swimming.

I turn to look at Niharu for help, but she adverts her eyes. Most of the attention she got was forgotten after my time was announced. I would be jealous but her fan club lead by Ike was growing so I might as well pity her too.

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**Another slightly larger chapter than the last one, done. Even though Vol 1 and 2 are boring, they are important. So be please be patient before the special exams.**

**...Sex?**

# Volume 1 Chapter 7 - Preparation for the Midterms

It has now been three weeks since the entrance ceremony and the behavior of the class wasn't showing any signs of improvement. At this point, I would be surprised if they gave us any points at all.

Chabashira-sensei walked into the room with a stack of paper in her hands.

"Everyone, listen up. It's the end of the month, so you're going to have to do this short test. But don't worry, it's just for future reference. It won't change anything on your report card,"

Her phrasing struck me as odd. Normally, only general grades were reflected in your report card. But the way Chiyabashira-sensei said they wouldn't be reflected in our report cards made me think that the grade could be reflected in some other way, and the only other way I can think of was points.

"Did you hear that?" I asked Niharu.

"Hmm? Oh, I sorta wasn't listening..."

I look over at her. She was looking at a group chat on her phone. It looks like the relaxed lifestyle of our classmates is catching up to her.

"You know what happens when you do that, right? There is a camera directly above your head," a point upwards, and the hidden camera flickers red as if to prove my point.

"Of course I know that. I'm not dumb. It's just that we won't get points either way, even if I try my best, so I might as well have some fun,"

"We don't know the criteria for the point allowance-" I take a copy of the test sheet from the person in front of me.

"-For all we know, they could be judging us individually instead of as a class,"

"Hmm, that's actually a fair point," she said, picking up one of the sheets herself.

"...Hey,"

We both turn to Horikita looking at us with a concerned expression. After the start of swimming lessons, she started to take what we said much more seriously.

"What do you guys mean we won't get points next month?" Her

eyes narrowed even more as she spoke.

"Well, there's no point in hiding it, I guess... we think our monthly allowance will be based on our behavior in class,"

Horikita opened her mouth, and closed it again. She seems to be thinking about it deeply.

"Well, its plausible since they don't reprimand students... but didn't she tell us we will receive 100,000 an month?"

"She said we would recieve 100,000 *this* month, but nothing else," She paled at my words, but couldn't say anything else since the test started.

"You can start now. Keep in mind that cheating is absolutely not permitted,"

### **Horikita POV**

Most of the test was around the same level as the entrance exam. It was nothing I couldn't handle. I was answering the questions relatively faster than most of the class from what I could see. I finally reached the last questions... what? There's no way these questions are in the realm of a first year highschooler.

I look around the classroom. To my right, a boy I dont know the name of seems to be struggling on the same question as me. Further ahead, Sudou-kun was asking for a replacement pen because he already snapped his second one in frustration. And to my left... what? Ayanokouji-kun is whispering something to Hasegawa-san while their pens lay on their desks? Have they even started to write down the answers? Were they taking this seriously? No... could it be they already finished? I cant look at their sheets because it might be considered cheating, so I'll just wait for the results. It's highly unlikely they have overwhelming intelligence on top of their physical strength anyway.

And there's also Kouenji's words on the bus. I didn't think much about it at the time, but he called them lab rats... who are they?

### **Ayanokouji POV**

Everyone handed their sheets to the front of the class, grumbling about the test. After I answered all of the questions, I told Niharu what Chabashira-sensei said before the test.

"Okay, that sums it up. Let's talk about it more tonight," I said while picking up my bag.

\*\*\*

Later that night, I was rereading Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte. As I flipped through the pages, Someone pounced on my back. I glanced at Niharu.

"Yes?"

"Hmph. I should have known you wouldn't react. Eh, whatever. Weren't we gonna discuss what Chabashira-sensei told us?"

"Right. Do you remember what she said?"

She looks down. "Well I remember what you told me she said,"

Oh, right. She's stopped paying attention in class.

"Hey! Can you blame me if I learned this then years ago?" She read my mind.

"I learnt it at the same time as you but im not having any trouble. Let's just get on to making a theory,"

"Ah, this is the best part," she grins excitedly. For some reason, Niharu loves making theories about things with me. She says it feels like she's in one of those movies she's started watching.

"Well, as you know, Chabashira-sensei specifically said it wont be reflected in the report card," I started.

"...So your suggesting it will be reflected in another way?" She said it exactly how I thought.

"Yes. I think the test is one of the things they use to 'evaluate our skills', if you know what I mean,"

"Yeah, I came to the same conclusion. Also, if our points from our allowance can be taken away, there would be a system to gain them too. Otherwise Class D would be broke for the whole time we live here,"

"Exactly. Well that wasn't very productive," I said. We just started the obvious and gained no new information.

"No, your wrong," she smiled.

"What do you mean?"

"Do you think it's possible to get more than 100,000 points a month? If Class A acted perfectly and then scored high in the exams, they might get an even larger allowance than what we started with,"

I actually hadn't thought of that. It wasn't like it would be hard to deduce, but I possibly missed it since I subconsciously believed Class D had no hope of reach that goal.

"To be honest, I didn't consider that so well done. However, it doesn't really change our goal or how we achieve it,"

"What even is our goal? If it was to increase our allowance and enjoy school with points then we would have warned the class on the first day,"

"Who knows,"

"Ahah, ok. Goodnight Kiyotaka," she says, hugging me softly.

\*\*\*

"Hey, Kiyotaka. Check your point balance,"

We were sitting down for breakfast on May 1st, the day our monthly points would be deposited. This was the moment of truth to see if we would get 100,000 points or not. Well, I already knew the answer. I unlock my phone and enter the school app. As I

thought, my point balance sat at 65,855 like yesterday.

**(A/N Since Kiyo cooks his meals now, he had to buy a bunch of equipment, along with extra ingredients. Plus he got 5000 points from the swimming race.)**

"This will be fun," Niharu said.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, yesterday I was talking with Hirata's group, and other than Hirata himself, nobody could pay for a proper lunch,"

"What? They used up all of their points the quickly? Is that even possible?" My standards for them were *low*, and yet they still manage to amaze me.

Niharu just smiles at me happily.

"What is it?"

"Oh, it's nothing. I was just thinking you're slowly becoming more expressive," I ponder her words. Now that I think about it, i have felt my face changing its expression recently, though most of it was just my eyebrows raising.

"That's a surprise,"

"Hah, there it goes again. I haven't taken a shower yet, so you can just leave without me. I'll see you at school,"

"Alright,"

As usual, I was one of the first people to get to class. I walk over to Horikita's desk. She looks up at me and sighs.

"I suppose I have to say I'm impressed. But why didn't you tell anyone about your theory?"

"This will serve as a lesson to get rid of the class' ridiculous attitude," She narrowed her eyes.

"Sure, it is technically effective, but was it worth losing all of our points?"

"I think our class deserves it anyway,"

She narrows her eyes even more. Does she have any other facial expressions? Not that I can say much.

"They might, but I dont. Now I have to suffer the same fate as them,"

"Don't act like you're a perfect student. If you figured out the system yourself then you could have stopped this from happening, but you were just as clueless as everyone else,"

She was silent after that. I left her to her thoughts and sat down. Soon enough, the class filled up and people started whispering to each other.

"Hey Shinohara-san, did you get your points today?"

"Oh, hey Satou. Its really weird, I actually didn't? Did you?"

"Ehh? No I didn't! What's up with that?"

And so on. Eventually Chabashira-sensei entered the classroom

and everyone focused on her.

"Well this is unusual. Do you guys have any questions?"

**Timeskip (even with the time slip, a lot if canon stuff will be repeated here.)**

"Are these... the results of all the classes?" Horikita asked.

"Are these...the results for each class?" Horikita tentatively took a guess. She was probably right. Class A through Class D were listed. To the side was a row of numbers that went up to a maximum of four digits. Class D had zero. Class C had 490. Class B had 650. And at the top was Class A, with a total of 940. In this case, 1000 points would mean 100,000 yen, wouldn't it? Every class had apparently lost points.

"Isn't something about this odd?" Horikita asks nobody in particular.

"You still haven't figured it out?" Niharu asks her, which gained the attention of our classmates.

"What do you mean, Hasegawa-san?"

"People are sorted into the classes based on merit. The best students in Class A, the worst student in Class D, and so on."

"Wait, that cant be right!" A few people were surprised by Yukimura's outburst. He usually doesn't talk much in class apart from answering the teachers questions.

"Really? What makes you think that, Yukimura?" Chabashira-sensei asked with a smirk.

"I'm confident that I was in at least the top ten percent with my entrance exam scores. Are you saying she's right, sensei? Why was I placed in the lowest class?"

"Who said people good at academics are superior? Everyone put in Class D mpis defective, with almost no exceptions,"

"Defective!? Wait- what do you mean almost? Is the sorting system unreliable?" Yukimura wasn't accepting the fact that he deserved to be in this class.

"I can assure you the system is fine. There was no mistake when any of you were selected," Chabashira-sensei said briskly, leaving no room for argument.

I started thinking. This was the second time the word defective popped up. It wasn't a word commonly used to describe people, so could it be more than just an insult? The definition of defective is 'having a problem or fault that prevents something from working correctly.' Maybe seemingly perfect students like Hirata have a defect that stops him from reaching his full potential? My thoughts were interrupted by a slam. Chabashira-sensei had stuck a sheet of paper onto the board.

"Here are the results of the recent test. Almost all of you are



hopeless," she said harshly. Indeed, the lowest score was Sudou with fourteen points, and the average was only sixty-four.

Yukimura was as good as he claimed, tying with Horikita and Kouenji at ninety points.

"If this was a real exam, seven of you would be expelled."

"Ehh? Expelled? What do you mean sensei?"

Chabashira-sensei drew a line above seven names.

"All of you scored below half of the average score, which means expulsion," she sighed.

I felt a few gazes directed towards me and tuned the teacher out. Horikita, to name one, was looking at us strangely.

"Hey Ayanokouji-kun, Hasegawa-san. Didn't you guys finish the test first? How did you get perfect scores?" A girl named Matsushita called out to us. She was either watching us in particular, or she is extremely observant. Her words also seemed to catch the attention of the class.

"Woah, Hasegawa-chan, that's amazing!"

"Yeah! You could have told us you were that smart!"

Luckily most of the attention was on Niharu.

"Enough!"

Everyone's attention snapped back to the front.

"Honestly, you guys are useless. I can't imagine any companies employing you in the future,"

**Timeskip (the only time skips I do will be skipping over things from the canon)**

"You're wrong. To make your dreams of a bright future come true, your only option is to overtake Class A. This school guarantees nothing for any other students."

"Th-that's...absurd! We didn't hear anything about that!" Yukimura stood up.

"How disgraceful. There's nothing more pitiful than men losing their cool."

As if prompted by Yukimura's words, Kouenji let out a sigh.

"Don't you feel dissatisfied being in Class D, Kouenji?" Yukimura asked.

"Dissatisfied? Why would I feel dissatisfied? I don't understand."

"Because the school says we're so low that we're basically delinquents and failures. We've been told that there's no guarantee whatsoever that we'll advance into higher education or get a job!"

"Pah. Utter nonsense. That's so marvelously stupid that I can't even find the words." Kouenji didn't even stop polishing his nails or turn to face Yukimura as he spoke.

"The school simply hasn't seen my potential yet. I pride myself on

being great, and I value, respect, and regard myself more highly than anyone. So, the school arbitrarily placing me into Class D means nothing. Say, for instance, that I dropped out of school-I would be perfectly fine. After all, I am 100 percent positive that the school would come crying to take me back."

That certainly sounded like something Kouenji would say. Was it being macho? Or narcissism? It's true that if you didn't care about the school's classification of students, then it really wasn't a big deal. If you considered Kouenji's impressive intellect and physical ability, it was difficult to imagine that all of the students in Class A could be better than him. Perhaps he'd been assigned to Class D because of his personality rather than his ability.

"Besides, I don't care in the slightest if the school does or doesn't assist me to higher education or the workforce. It's been decided that I will lead the Kouenji conglomerate group. Whether I'm in Class D or Class A is a trivial matter."

It was true that for a man whose future was already decided, getting into Class A was far from a necessity. Yukimura, at a loss for words, simply sat back down.

"It looks like your bubbles have been burst. If you had simply understood the harsh reality of the situation from the start, then this long homeroom period might have meant something. Your midterm exams are in three weeks. Please think things over, and be careful not to drop out. I have confidence that you can find a way to avoid getting red marks on your report cards. If at all possible, challenge yourself to act in a way befitting a skilled individual."

Chiabashira-sensei exited the room, closing the door with some force for added emphasis. The students marked in red were left dejected. Even the normally proud Sudou clicked his tongue and hung his head in shame.

\*\*\*

After class, once everyone had finished complaining about their sudden loss of income, Hirata stood up.

"Hey everybody, I know this is a bad time... but the midterms are only a couple weeks away. Can we try to organize some study groups so nobody gets expelled?"

A few people nodded slowly. Judging from the recent test, the class was in grave danger of losing more than just a few people. Study groups were our only hope at survival.

Niharu and I get up to leave. We were planning on going to Keyaki mall to watch a new movie that was popular with the upperclassman, but unfortunately, our peace can't last without being interrupted.

"Hey, Ayanokouji-kun! Hasegawa-san! Can you two please

participate in this meeting?"

Hirata called out to us before we reached the door. Niharu pretended not to hear him and kept walking. I feel pretty tired after all of the yelling and panicking for our classmates today, so I just lazily waved him off.

"If you want me to be a tutor, that's fine. You can sort out all the groups," I lump more work on Hirata without any sense of shame.

\*\*\*

After finishing the movie, we were heading back to the dorms in a comfortable silence.

"Kiyotaka. Do you mind explaining this?"

Nevermind. I turn around to Niharu waving her phone in my face angrily. I looked closer and the screen contained the study groups Hirata decided on.

"What's the problem?" I cant find any reason for her to be mad.

"Did you tell Hirata I would be a tutor? Why the hell do I have my own group?"

I sighed. "I only said I will be a tutor be a tutor. He just assumed you would too."

She opened her mouth again to complain so I had to shut her down.

"Its your own fault for ignoring him when he called to you. What's wrong with being a tutor anyway? Your group looks like it'll be easy to handle,"

"I'm mad because I want to be in the same group as you, idiot!"

"You could at least try to be more independent,"

"We have worked with each other for half of our lives in absolutely everything. That's not going to change with these study groups," she isn't going to back down, so I just give up.

"You can be way to stubborn sometimes, Niharu. Just tell Hirata tomorrow to change the groups,"

"Thanks Kiyotaka," she said with a smile. Did she think I was complimenting her?

---

First chapter with a slightly large word count. Still not as large as what I want though.

This was also the first time I used time skips and a POV from someone other than Kiyo.

Dont worry MakucchibiNotSmol, wholesome sex will come eventually.

-Unusual-meet1984, January 13, 11 PM. My sleep schedule hates this fic.

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# Volume 1 Chapter 8 - The Study Groups

## 1/2

"Hey, Hirata. What the hell did you do with the study groups?"

It was currently in the early morning of May 2nd, one day after the point system was revealed and the midterms were announced. Niharu has stomped over to Hirata's desk, pushing people who got in her way.

"What's wrong, Hasegawa-san?" He gulped. She isn't usually this worked up.

"What makes you think you can just assign me to some random study group without any consideration? At least ask me if I want to be a tutor first! There's no way I'm spending my own personal time teaching some braindead people basic equations! Jeez. Assign me to Kiyotaka's group and I'll forgive you," she keeps in the verbal attack without relenting.

"Woah, please calm down, Hasegawa-san. Are you saying you won't tutor in one study group? We really need your help since you got a perfect score,"

"Did you even hear me? What did you think I meant? Just put the people in my study group into the other ones,"

I couldn't help but pity Hirata. He puts so much responsibility on his own shoulders just to be yelled at by this spoiled girl.

"Niharu, Hirata is trying his best here. We can discuss what to do with the study groups later, okay?"

"Hmph," she crossed her arms and doesn't say anything else.

"Ahh, I was really looking forward to a study group with Hasegawa-chan," Hondou said sadly. He really wasn't helping with the situation.

"Um, Ayanokouji-kun?" A girl I hadn't talked to before approached my desk.

"Hey, uh... your names Satou, isn't it?"

Even though we had been at the school for a month, I have a pretty small social circle. There were some people I don't even know the names of yet.

"Yup! So, is it like, that time of month for Hasegawa-san?"

"That time of month?"

"You know... like..." she didn't seem to know how to finish the

Sentence.

"She is referring to a part of the menstrual cycle," Horikita said emotionlessly.

"Wow Horikita-san, you're pretty straightforward. But yeah, I guess that's what I mean,"

Now that I think about it, she does seem to be much more emotional than usual. Yesterday I caught her crying while eating a tub of icecream because I didn't cook her favorite meal.

"That would explain a lot if that's the case. I'll ask her about it later."

"Okay. And Ayanokouji-kun, can I have your contact information? J-Just because we're in the same study group!"

"Sure,"

She adds my contact and quickly returns to her desk.

\*\*\*

It was now lunchtime, and all of the tutors of the class met up in the cafeteria to discuss what to do with Niharu's group.

**(A/N in this fic, the study groups involve the whole class instead of just the failing students, because it's easier for Kiyoko and Niharu to make friends that way. I'm thinking of making it similar to the canon Ayanokouji Group.)**

"To start off, I think we should divide Hasegawa-san and her group into the other groups evenly,"

"Ah, Hirata, I'm sorry but I can't take any more people. My group decided to do a test session together and I could barely keep up," Yukimura said.

"That's okay Yukimura! I'll take in any extra people if you guys are having any trouble. I'll take Hondou first because he's friends with Ike and Yamauchi," Kushida saves the day with a smile. I wonder why Kushida puts so much of a burden on herself.

"If we are claiming people now, then I'll take Niharu herself for obvious reasons," first, she wouldn't accept a group other than mine, and I also didn't feel like adding another student to list of people I have to help.

I turn to Horikita.

"Also, I'm surprised you agreed to be a tutor. What made you feel like lending your hand?"

"I suppose you made a point yesterday that I haven't helped the class, so I'm trying to change that. But I'm doing it for myself, not anyone else,"

It seems like my words from yesterday somewhat reached her. She's now more willing to help others if it benefits her.

"Horikita-san? Sorry to interrupt your conversation, but is it ok if you take on two more people like Kushida?"

"Absolutely not,"

"What about Ayanokouji-kun?"

"Sorry, I can't,"

"Mii-chan?"

"Erm, I'm really sorry..."

"Hah, that's ok. I guess I can take on more..."

"Is that everything?"

"Actually, I wanted to review the material with you guys and make plans-"

"It's fine. We can figure it out on our own,"

I really need another break. Having no responsibilities like the other students must be great. I left the cafeteria and was walking back to the classroom when my phone pinged. There was a notification from 'Study Group'.

*"Okay, everybody's in the group chat now. Let's all meet up tonight!"*  
(Satou Maya)

It looks like I won't be getting a break any time soon.

*"Do we have to start studying straight away? Why dont we meet in a cafe first?"* (Hasabe Haruka)

*"That's what I was thinking!"* (Satou Maya)

Phew. I can handle some social meet-up at least.

*"How about we go to that place on the second floor in Keyaki mall? I've never been there with any friends,"* (Hasabe Haruka)

*"I dont have any problems with that,"* (Ayanokouji Kiyotaka)

*"Sure!"* (Satou Maya)

*"What place are we talking about?"* (Miyake Akito)

*"You really don't know, Miyatchi?"* (Hasabe Haruka)

Miyatchi? Whatever. I guess our first meeting has been decided.

\*\*\*

**(A/N I've been rereading some other fics for ideas and I barely write any remotely long monologues. Sorry.)**

I had to physically drag Niharu out of the dorm to get her to start moving again.

"If you're going to be in the same group as me, you need to attend every meeting we have,"

"Let me stay in bed just this once," she muttered. Her fiery attitude from today had completely vanished, which reminds me to ask her something.

"Niharu, is it that time of month for you?" I asked, imitating the way Satou had phrased it. I wasn't too familiar with that type of informal language yet.

"What do you mean?" She asks curiously. It seems she isn't either.

"Are you in the days leading up to the Follicular Phase of your menstrual cycle?" I phrased it in an easier way to understand.

"Oh, how did you know?"

"Your mood has been swinging around a bit recently. Just come to the cafe with us and we can deal with it later,"

"Hmm, your actually pretty considerate, Kiyotaka. I guess I can come along just this once,"

she changed her mind for no apparent reason. Is her brain just too complex that I can't comprehend it?

"Well, let's go. We need to get there at 6 o'clock,"

The time now was 5:40. If we hurried, we could get there slightly before the deadline.

\*\*\*

We arrived outside the cafe to find Hasabe waiting for us.

"Over here!" She said energetically, waving and jogging over to us.

"Are you the first person here?" I asked, looking around.

The area wasn't that crowded since most people were in the dorms for dinner, with just a few couples walking by. It wouldn't be hard to find someone you're looking for.

"Oh, no. I was just waiting for you guys. Everyone else is already inside, so let's go!"

Niharu and I exchanged bemused glances. This girl was way too lively. I just shrugged and we followed her into the cafe. Everyone was waiting for us around a large circular table near the window. This would be an ideal spot to study.

"Hey everybody. I know this meeting is just a one-time thing, but we could use this place for studying as well," I voiced my thoughts. It would be good if we good if we decided on a regular spot early on.

"Erm... I dont really like social places like this... is it ok if we just go to the library?" A girl named Inogashira asked timidly.

"Aww, you're no fun Inogashira!" Hasabe pouted.

Inogashira thought she was being serious and bowed her head deeply.

"I'm really sorry!"

Hasabe just blinked.

"Oh, dont worry! I'm just kidding!"

"Okay..."

The conversation came to an awkward halt at that. Nobody knew what to say.

"Umm..." Satou begins to say something, and everyone looked at her expectantly.

"I'll go get us drinks! What do you guys want?" After taking our orders, she escaped from the conversation. Being the group's tutor, I guess it's up to me now to keep it going.

"I know this meeting was just to get to know each other, but can

you guys tell me your scores on that practice test? I need to know where everyone is at,"

"Fifty-nine,"

"Fifty-eight,"

"Oh, Miyatchi! I didn't know you were dumb like me!"

"I just didn't try,"

"Haah!"

"S-Sixty five," Inogashira said. Her score was pretty decent compared to most of our class, being just above the average score.

"A hundred," Niharu said proudly.

"Wow Niharu. Never missing a chance to brag,"

"You asked for our scores!"

"I asked the study group for their scores. You're just tagging along,"

At this point, Satou came back with our drinks.

"What were you guys talking about while I was gone?"

"Our scores on that practice test. What did you get, Satou?"

She looked down in embarrassment.

"I got thirty eight, but I swear it was 'cause I didn't pay attention in class!" I guess she was telling the truth. I think she was one of the most disruptive people, even among the girls in her friend group, which means a lot.

"Well, it's bad, but with a bit of studying you should safely pass. The rest of you are pretty good too,"

They all nodded.

"Hey Ayanokouji-kun, didn't you and Hasegawa-san get a perfect score?"

"Ohh, yeah! And you guys are childhood friends! Did you guys go to some really famous middle school?" Hasabe asks. This is an awkward topic for us.

"Uh, I wouldn't say it is that well known..." Niharu says uncertainly.

"Not to brag, but I think we both just have good genetics,"

"Ahh, I wonder what your kids will be like then," Hasabe said teasingly.

"Hmm, that would be interesting..." instead of getting embarrassed, Niharu starts wondering about it herself.

"Ehh? You aren't considering it, are you!?"

I start pondering it too. What would happen if the two most talented people alive had a kid? Would they become the ultimate genius? Or is there a limit to how intelligent genetics make you?

"Not you too! Are... Are you guys a couple?" Satou asks nervously.

"Of course they are! I haven't even seen them separately before!"

"If you mean romantically, then no,"



"Huh?"

"Eh?"

"Really?"

I sigh. "Can we just change the topic?"

"No! Literally everyone in class thinks you guys are a thing! This is major news!"

I just sigh again.

\*\*\*

After dinner at the cafe, the group went back to the dorms and went our own separate ways.

"See you guys tomorrow," Miyake was the last one to leave. Now we were alone.

"Well, that was tiring. Let's just get back to our room,"

Once we got back, I looked up ways to help a girl on her 'period', as they call it. Niharu just buries her face into a cushion on the couch.

"Here, I found a list of things that can help,"

She pulls her self up and starts reading out loud.

"Ice cream and chocolate, movies, turn on the AC, medication... If you get impregnated, then the effects completely disappear! Let's do this one!"

"I think that's too impractical. While nurturing the child, your movement would be hindered and you will gain weight, among other problems,"

"Yeah, I guess your right. I'll go buy some pills tomorrow,"

---

**I'm splitting this chapter into two parts because I made this one a filler without realizing.**

**From now on, there should be 5-7k word chapters every 2 or 3 days. This one was 2k for context.**

**So the new friend group is slowly forming, with Satou and Inogashira replacing Keisei and Airi. I was thinking of using Matsushita instead of Inogashira, but she can come into the story later on.**

**We were close, but still no sex. :(**

## Volume 1 Chapter 9 - The Study Groups

### 2/2

"Hey, Niharu. I have a plan for everyone to pass the midterms,"

Niharu pressed the button for the elevator multiple times, and replied without looking at me.

"Are you thinking of getting the midterms from the past years? I was planning on doing that tomorrow,"

"Really? I should have known. I trust your judgment on what to do with them. If you want, I can lend you some points in the negotiations,"

"That would be awesome, thanks,"

"Should we give it to our study group before anyone else? I'll still tutor them for a couple weeks, but I want them to score higher than the other groups,"

We had both wordlessly agreed the answers shouldn't be distributed immediately.

"Yeah! We might get more credit as tutors if we do that! We can hand out the results to everyone the day before, and a two or three day head start would be enough for our group,"

\*\*\*

A few weeks passed by quickly, with the entire class working hard to increase their grade. Even Sudou made an effort to stay awake. The midterms were now looming over our heads like a dark cloud, with only a few days left for us to prepare. I was currently helping my study group after they took a mock test I had concocted.

"Okay everyone, I've got the results here. This test was the same level as the practice test from a few weeks back, so we'll see how effective this study group was."

Everyone except Niharu looked at the papers in my hand with anticipation.

"Maya, congratulations. You made the largest improvement with 62 points," through the study group, we all got closer to each other, and called each other by our first names.

"Whooh! Nice one, Naya!" Haruka said, calling her by the nickname she gives to everyone.

"Thanks, but it was all thanks to Kiyotaka," she said with a hint of embarrassment.

"Haruka, Akito, both of you got 70 points each,"

"Heh. Guess we're in sync,"

"Yup!"

"You guys are in sync more than you think. Out of the 35 questions you both got correct, 31 of them were on the same problems,"

"Woah. Is that a coincidence? Did you guys do something to make that happen?" Maya asked.

"I had no idea,"

"I didn't do anything either! Isn't this crazy, Miyatchi?"

I moved on with reading out the scores.

"Niharu, you got 100 points again,"

"Heh, no surprise there,"

Nobody was shocked. Niharu had sometimes helped me tutor everyone in the group, so they somewhat knew how smart she was. At least they think they do, but she's way smarter.

"And finally, Kokoro,"

"Yes?" She had started to open up to us, so she didn't stutter as much.

"Well done, you got 78 points, the highest in the group. I'm confident all of you can pass the midterms,"

"Hey! I got a perfect score!"

"You're technically not in the study group, remember? Your score doesn't count,"

Haruka chuckled.

"Isn't that a bit harsh, Kiyopon? I'm sure Haru just wants some recognition,"

"It's okay, Haruka. I'll get his praise when I do something noteworthy,"

"Isn't a perfect score noteworthy enough!?"

Neither of us answered. For us, a high school level quiz was like reading the alphabet.

"Well, I guess this is the last time we meet up like this," I say, switching the topic.

"Yeah... this was actually kind of fun..." Kokoro muttered.

"Hey, why don't we just keep the group the same for the other exams? It won't feel the same studying with anyone else," Haruka said.

"That's a great idea!" Maya was quick to agree. The others nodded their heads.

"Well if you guys want to, I don't have any problems with it,"

"Okay! Then it's decided," Haruka clapped her hands together. "By the end of the year, with Kiyopon and Haru's help, we'll be acing the exams easily!"

I almost didn't doubt that. With the growth everyone showed in just a few weeks, I wouldn't be surprised if they became some of Class D's top scorers.

"Oh, I almost forgot! Here's the answers to all of the upcoming tests," Niharu said casually, pulling out the previous midterms as we had planned.

"Haha, if only it were that simple,"

Nobody took her seriously.

"I'm not kidding. Take one of these home to look at tonight,"

"Haha- wait, are you being serious right now? Like serious serious?"

"Yup,"

"Ehh? How the hell did you get a cheat sheet?"

She patted me on the back.

"We have our methods,"

\*\*\*

The next day, during lunch, we arranged another meeting between all of the classes tutors to report the progress of the groups. Hirata commenced the meeting by speaking up first.

"Before we begin, I want to thank Ayanokouji-kun about the mock test he made for everyone. It really helped us in getting a measure in our classmates' abilities,"

I just nod.

"...anyway, does anyone want to report anything interesting? My group is doing fine,"

"Nothing is wrong with my group,"

"Me too,"

"I find my groups scores appalling, but they will pass the exams," Horikita is as judgmental as ever.

Kushida, who had been silent until now, finally spoke up.

"...well, I'm kind of worried about Sudou's English score. He barely got any of the questions right in Ayanokouji-kun's test,"

Before anyone else could speak, I stood up to draw everyone's attention.

"I wouldn't worry about that. You see, something Niharu and I figured out was that the midterms of this year and last year are completely identical,"

Everyone's eyes widened at my words, while Horikita's eyes narrowed.

"I know what your suggesting, but wouldn't that be considered cheating?"

"I agree, this is too risky. Everyone except Sudou is already almost guaranteed to pass," Yukimura said.

"Don't worry. If it was against the rules, the school would have specified it. I want all of you to hand these to your groups on the day before the exam for extra points," I assure them while pulling out photocopies of the midterms from my bag. After a little more convincing, everyone agreed to my plan.

---

Well, that's all for today. Volume 1 is finally coming to an end, its been a long journey (three days). I've been learning 'Canon in D' on the piano recently, if anybody cares.

Since I added too much filler in the first half of the chapter, I could use this half to get down to business. From now on I'll have more of Kiyotaka's thoughts and less dialogue.

Also, if the next chapter doesn't come tomorrow, then it will the next day.

Also, holy shit I just found out the fic is #1 of the COTE tag right now. Thanks everyone!

-Unusual-meet1984, January 14, 12 PM. I'll stop complaining about my lack of sleep.

## Volume 1 Chapter 10 - The Midterms

Chabashira-sensei walked into the classroom with her usual smirk on her face.

"A full attendance? You all seem pretty confident today."

"Well, sensei, my academic skills are actually pretty reliable when I feel like putting the effort in."

Ike, who had been having panic attacks in the days leading up to the exam was now completely relaxed. Some people started laughing, knowing the real reason for his bravado. Since the tutors succeeded in handing out the papers, Ike wasn't the only one showing newfound confidence.

"I suppose we'll see what you really made of after the results come out," she said, handing out sheets to people in the front row.

Excited murmurs floated around the classroom. Apparently the exam was identical to what sheet they had received yesterday.

Once everyone had gotten their tests, we were allowed to start. Apart from Sudou in the English section, I couldn't see anybody having any difficulty.

Since the exam line for failure was the average cut in half, the better your classmates are, the higher risk there is of you failing. In Sudou's case, the risk was real, especially with the answers being leaked. I also caught Niharu frowning in his direction a few times.

"Please put your pens down."

"Whooh! That exam was a breeze!"

"I feel like I got 120 percent! Right, Ken?"

"Huh? Oh, I guess..." Sudou scratched his head. He doesn't have much faith in his score either.

Apart from him, the midterms had guaranteed everyone's safety. There might even be a couple more perfect scores.

"Ah, Niharu, I almost forgot. How many points did you spend to get the midterms? I'll give half of them back,"

"Uh, I kind of got them for free,"

"Wait, how did that happen?"

"...I just kind of asked him nicely..." she doesn't seem to understand how she did it either.

"Tell me exactly what happened,"

"I went up to him since he has the vegetable meal set, sat next to him, and asked if he had the papers..." she said, recalling the events

that took place.

"...I see now," she tends to lean closer to people when she's asking a question without realizing it. I've given up on making her fix her habit.

"Hey, who's idea was it to get those papers anyway?" Someone asked.

A few people pointed at Niharu.

"Wow! Hasegawa-chan is my guardian angel!"

"Hasegawa-chan! Hasegawa-chan!"

Everyone was thankful for Niharu's work, but also tired by their constant chants. Even Kushida had a crack in her usual smile.

"The results will arrive on Friday's final period, so be there," Chabashira-sensei said, before exiting the class looking pleased.

\*\*\*

I woke up on the day and tugged Niharu off my chest. Today is the day when we see if Sudou passed all of his his exams or not, but even if he didn't, there was still a chance for him to survive.

This time it was my turn to make our bentos, so I went to the kitchen to prepare. As I was dropping rice into the box, my phone vibrated in my pocket.

*"After we get the midterm results, can we go somewhere to celebrate?"*  
(Inogashira Kokoro)

I never thought she would be the one to make plans. She really has grown a lot. I just left it on opened and waited for someone else to reply first.

*"That's a good idea, but where do we meet?"* (Miyake Akito)

*"I know!"* (Satou Maya)

*"Actually nevermind,"* (Satou Maya)

She immediately retracts her idea.

*"What were you thinking? Any idea might help,"* (Miyake Akito)

*"...I mean, since Kiyotaka is kind of the head of the group, we could go to his place? It's ok if he doesn't want us to,"* (Satou Maya)

It wasn't a bad idea, but I just didn't want anyone coming into my room. There was also a recently opened arcade in Keyaki Mall.

*"Haruka, if you say anything I will kill you!"* (Satou Maya)

*"Hah, how did you know? Well I think it's a good idea anyway,"*  
(Hasabe Haruka)

*"Absolutely not,"* (Ayanokouji Kiyotaka)

*"Haruka, stop typing. I'm not hiding anything,"* (Ayanokouji Kiyotaka)

*"Again? Am I that easy to read?"* (Hasabe Haruka)

*"The room is 401. Everyone is welcome."* (Hasegawa Niharu)

*"Did you just give us permission to enter someone else's room?"* (Satou Maya)

*"Not really. Let's talk about it more at school." (Hasegawa Niharu)*

I head back into the bedroom. Niharu had woken up, watching me enter with a wicked smile.

"You did that on purpose, didn't you," I sigh.

"Yup! Well, I didn't do it only for the purpose of annoying you. I think it's a good plan."

I roll my eyes. I guess the arcade will have to wait.

\*\*\*

"Okay students, I have to say I'm impressed. Class D has never, and I mean never, been the class with the highest average."

She pulls out the results, and everyone cheered. There was no red line to be seen, and 10 rows of straight perfect scores dominating the sheet. Even Inogashira was yelling and hugging the girls of our study group, being one of those 10.

"However," Chabashira-sensei pulled out a red marker.

"No..."

"Sensei, is that-?"

She draws a line over Sudou's name.

"Sudou, you failed,"

**Timeskip**

"I'm going to the bathroom."

Horikita looked at me suspiciously.

"Same," Niharu stood up and followed me. My lie was already easy to see through, and the fact that Niharu left with me makes it completely obvious we're planning something.

"Hey, wai-!"

I shut the door behind me for good measure, before following Chabashira-sensei's echoing footsteps. While chasing her, i could sense someone following us from behind. Im guessing it was someone from our class.

We found her lighting a cigarette on the school rooftop.

"You kids aren't meant to be up here outside of school time, you know?" She let out a puff of smoke.

"I'm going to get straight to the point. Is there any way to bring Sudou back?"

"You already heard me talk to Horikita in class. Is that not enough?" She avoided the question. This nearly confirms my theory.

Niharu pats my shoulder, asking for permission to speak. I nod and step back.

"Sensei, Something we learned a couple weeks ago was that one class point was equal to a hundred private points."

"Obviously."

"Well, how many private points are worth a single point in an exam?"



Chabashira-sensei's eyes widen, and she starts laughing almost hysterically.

"You kids are amazing! Can i just ask you guys something before i answer?"

"...okay."

"I read your application forms for entering thos school, and ive never seen anything like it. And it was approved by the chairman himself?" She shakes her head in disbelief.

"And then, you waltz in, break a few national records, get perfect scores in every test, and now this? Who are you people?"

That was the second time i had been asked that question while I've been here, and i still dont understand it. I am Ayanokouji Kiyotaka. Thats all there is to it.

"We can't answer that question. Can you just tell us how much we have to pay?"

"That's disappointing, I'm really curious about you two, but never mind. You need 200,000 points to save him. 100,000 for each point,"

**(A/N Niharu got 100, Kiyo didnt hold back, Inogashira got the cheat sheet early, and Horikita didnt lower her own score. Thats why the average was higher than before.)**

This isn't good. If it was only one point needed for Sudou to pass, we could afford it. The question is if the person behind me can help.

Niharu and i both had around 60,000 each, because our club activities earned us a lot. I guess its because we can beat some professional athletes.

**(A/N sorry i forgot the club they entered even existed. I'll remember to include it in the future.)**

"Horikita, how many points do you have?" I call out behind me. Horikita steps out of her hiding spot.

"Huh? How did you kno-?"

"We need around more 80,000 points to complete the transaction."

"Uh- whatever. I have enough, but why should i spend so many points for someone like him? All he does is drag the class down."

"Look, we dont have the time right now, so can you just put your trust in our judgment? We can even pay you back later if you want."

"How will you do that? We dont have any class points and after this transaction, you will have nothing left."

I can't blame her for being stubborn this time, but having Sudou would be a great advantage for out class. Chabashira-sensei watched us argue with a smirk on her face.

"Please, Horikita," Niharu started begging.

"Can you just have faith in me and Kiyotaka? I promise we will

get you your points back."

Horikita paused, seeming to consider it.

"...based on your abilities, I can understand you can get my points back somehow, but why are you so desperate to save Sudou?"

Niharu was waiting for this question, and immediately started listing the benefits of saving him.

"When he learns about what we did for him, he will try to change his attitude in class to make sure we didn't do anything for him in vain."

"That isn't guaranteed, and even if it was, it's nowhere near enough for me to pay."

"Of course. Sudou is also one of the largest assets to the class in physical ability, and if he gets expelled, we are certain there will be a penalty that effects our class points."

Chabashira-sensei closed her eyes and sighed in awe, proving our point.

"Why do we need his physical abilities?"

"We believe there are more ways to get class points than just written exams, like a sports festival or in club activities."

Chabashira-sensei's expression turned into one of shock.

"In these events, we will likely be competing against the other classes to graduate with all of the advertised benefits."

At this point, Chabashira-sensei was struggling to stand up.

"Has someone told you everything there is about the school? I'm not allowed to say this, but your accuracy with predictions so far has been flawless."

Instead of answering, Niharu turned back to Horikita.

"So, what do you think?"

Horikita's expression was now a conflicted one. After a few more moments, she sighed.

"Fine. But I'll be expecting my points back." We all gave our phones to Chabashira-sensei, and she transferred the points while holding back laughter, and disbelief, and despair.

\*\*\*

After school, as planned, the study group met up in dorm room 401. We decided not to invite Sudou and Horikita to the celebration since they weren't close with the rest of the group.

I brought out tea as everyone gathered around the couch.

"So how did you do it? Everyone was surprised when you returned with Sudou," Haruka asked the question on everyone's minds.

"We have our methods."

"Hey, you can tell us, right?"

"Yeah, don't worry. I'm kidding. It turns out it's possible to buy

exam scores."

"What? Isn't that kinda cheating? Then what's the point in studying?"

"Each point we bought was worth 100,000 points."

"Ehh?" Everyone collectively gasped.

"Horikita helped us pay. I don't feel like explaining anything else," when we got back to the classroom, everyone asked the same questions. I can't count how many times I had to recount what happened.

"If you don't want to elaborate, I understand."

Before anyone could ask further, Kokoro decided to stop pressuring us for answers, which prompted the others to do the same.

"Hmm, I guess we can stop with the questioning for now..." Akito said slowly.

"Hmph. You guys have to tell us some other time, 'kay? I wanna know every little detail." Haruka didn't completely give up.

I took a sip of my tea. It was slightly bitter.

"Hey, I remember why I wanted to come here in the first place!" Maya moved the conversation in a different direction.

"Hmm? What's that?"

"I've always wondered how Kiyotaka decorates his room..." she realizes what she just said.

"Not like that, Haruka!" She covers her head with a cushion.

"Why do you always say my name in particular? I don't tease you *that* much, do I?"

"You do," everyone said simultaneously.

"Hehe, I guess I do. Let's do this dorm tour!"

Her attitude completely changes and jumps up and runs into the kitchen. Her energy suddenly shows no limits.

We all give each other exasperated looks and follow her.

We enter to find her examining the cookingware.

"I didn't know you cooked, Kiyoon?"

"My parents made me do lessons when I was younger."

"So you could make something for us someday?"

"Sure. When I get a good amount of points I can make everyone lunch."

We moved on to the bedroom. Niharu had added her own things around the room, so it seemed a bit more feminine than I would have liked.

"What the hell is this?"

"I wasn't the one who decorated the room. I-"

"That's not what I'm talking about! Where did you get this massive bed from? How many points did it cost?"

"Oh, uh, it came with the room," I forgot everyone else's rooms were equipped with mattresses fitting for only one person.

"Why? Do all guys have this?"

Akito shook his head.

"Nope, my bed is half the size of this one,"

"Why did you get a bed this large all to yourself?"

"It isn't all to himself," Niharu said. "He shares this dorm room with me."

For some reason, nobody said anything. Everyone's eyes flickered to the room's decorations and realized she was telling the truth.

"W-WHAT?"

"HOW IS THIS ALLOWED?"

I didn't expect this reaction. Were they jealous we were allowed to be roommates?

Kokoro managed to keep her voice under an acceptable limit.

"Y-You guys don't, like, both use the bed, do you?"

"I don't understand what the big deal is, but yes."

Maya fainted on the spot. There has to be something I'm missing here.

\*\*\*

It took a long time, but everyone managed to calm down and get back to the couch.

"I knew you guys were out of touch with social norms, but how you aren't aware of this is beyond me," Haruka shook her head in disbelief.

"To put it simply, sleeping together has *heavy implications*," she emphasizes the last part.

"Heavy implications?" Niharu raises an eyebrow in confusion. I think I'm doing something similar.

"Like, uh, h-having sex!" She flinches.

"Oh, we don't,"

"That's not the point!"

"So you aren't together, but you sleep in the same bed?" Satou asks.

Haruka turns to her.

"I'm not done with them yet!"

"Pretty much," I confirm her question.

"I see. How many people know you share a room?" Akito asks. He seems to be the person least affected by the situation.

"Not you too!" Haruka didn't want to let it go.

"Calm down Haruka. And Akito, you guys are the first students to know, but it wasn't like we were keeping it a secret,"

"So we're the first people to visit your room?"

"Well we don't have many close friends to invite over,"

It took a while for Haruka to calm down, but we kept talking until the curfew came and everyone returned to their rooms.

---

I struggled to make the last part without committing suicide. Im not good at writing that kind of stuff.

That's the end of Vol 1. I swear the chapters will get longer there just wasn't enough content to cover and i didnt want to stretch it out.

-unusual-meet1984, January 15, 11 PM. Goodnight, I love you guys.



## Volume 2 Chapter 1 - The Fight

This morning, on June 1st, was supposed to be the day everyone received their points, but my balance was still zero when i woke up. At first i was wondering if the school made a mistake or if i made a miscalculation, or if they did it on purpose. When class started, and some of my class threw questions at Chabashira-sensei.

"Sensei, are we still on zero class points?"

"Why didn't I get anything today?"

Chabashira-sensei sighed. "Just shut up and let me explain. Actually, Class D has 87 class points-"

"Whooh!" Ike interrupted her explanation. The whole class glared at him, causing him to cower in his seat.

"But they haven't been deposited due to some circumstances."

"Can you explain those circumstances, sensei?" Hirata asked.

"Not yet, but once the problem has been solved, everyone's points will be distributed. This is simply what the school has decided, and there was no error. I won't be hearing any more complaints," she said, shutting down the topic.

Her wording suggested something she didn't directly say. Apparently there was a problem to be solved, but it wasn't an error in the counting or distribution of points, and the school *decided* to hold our allowance back. There is a possibility it is a punishment, but if our points will be given to us when they solve the problem then it's possible they don't know who to punish.

"Sensei, did the other classes get any points?"

"I suppose I can answer this last question. You aren't the only class to miss out on points."

"Heh, at least we aren't suffering alone." Ike said, but that wasn't the point.

\*\*\*

I was lounging in my dorm room after club activities when someone knocked on the door. It sounded urgent.

Niharu was standing, so she went to get it.

"Oh, hey Niharu... is this Ayanokouji's place?" It was Sudou.

"Yeah, come inside." Niharu likes to invite people in on my behalf for some reason.

He walked in and plopped himself down on the couch next to me, and grabbed my shoulders.

"Ayanokouji! Please help me!" That was unexpected.

"Okay, Sudou. Calm down. What do you need help with?"

He paused for a second, seeming to reconsider his decision of coming here.

"Well... since you already saved me once, i don't want to burden you again... but your my only hope. My friends are all idiots like me,"

"It's fine, just tell me what happened."

"Okay... so i think I'm the reason we didn't get any points..."

Im starting to regret our decision to save him. I miss the 60,000 points I lost, and in less than a week he already got himself into more trouble.

"Go on."

"So some Class C bastards called me to the special annix after basketball, and they were really jealous, 'cuz I might be recruited as a regular on the team, so they all tried to start a fight, and I bashed 'em easily in a 3 on 1,"

"Woah, slow down," Niharu had joined us on the couch, with her legs propped on the coffee table and her head on my lap. Sudou gave her a weird look.

"You're about to be recruited as a regular? So far Kiyotaka and I the only first years to become regulars in a club. I'm impressed."

Sudou puffed out his chest.

"Yeah, I take pride in my basketball skills."

I sigh. This is getting further away from the point at every moment.

"Wait. So you got called out somewhere, they provoked you, and you beat them up?"

"Hey, it was self defense! They threw the first punch."

Since another class was involved, it would make sense if this is why our points were being held back. But if it wasn't solved yet, then there was a lack of evidence on both sides.

"Do you remember seeing any cameras when you went there?" Niharu was thinking the same thing as I am. Sudou has probably become the target of a setup.

"I dont pay attention to that stuff, so I don't know... but I think there was a witness," he said uncertainly.

"I'm not actually sure, I just felt like someone was watching," he added quickly.

"If someone else was there, it's likely they are in Class C since nobody has come forward. You fell for a trap, Sudou."

"What!?"

"You were called to a building without security or students, where three Class C students provoked you into fighting them. They



may have throw the first punch, but did they fight back much when you retaliated?"

He started to understand the situation.

"Oh shit. SHIT! What happens now?"

"Im guessing they have filed a complaint to the school since they are aware of the incident, assuming thats why our points are being held back,"

Sudou grew pale at my words. I sighed.

"Don't worry, you can count on Kiyotaka and I to clear this up!" Niharu says. I'm being dragged into one thing after another. Well, I probably would have helped out anyway.

"Really? Will you guys do that for me?"

Niharu subtly pinches my thigh, pressuring me into agreeing.

"Of course, Sudou. But you have to promise me you won't get into any more fights." He flinched at my words.

"Yeah, I've been tryna fix myself up after you gave me a second chance, but i guess I've got a long way to go," he said, and stood up.

"Thanks guys. I feel way better if you two have my back."

I watched him as walked back out the door. He still reacts on impulse, but his maturity has grown considerably since the start of the year. Maybe saving him was a good idea after all.

"Sudou has improved a lot."

"Yeah, maybe he's not such a bad guys after all."

\*\*\*

The next morning, Chabashira-sensei walked up to the podium without any books or teaching material. Whenever she does this, it means she is about to make an important announcement.

"Sudou, to be frank I'm disappointed. Some of your classmates gave up a lot to save you, and after getting another chance you screw up immediately,"

"What are you talking about, sensei?" Horikita asked with a concerned voice. It seems she is worried her points went to waste.

"The other day, there was a fight between Sudou and a few Class C students. This is also why you didn't recieve any points yesterday."

Everyone turned and glared at Sudou.

"What? They started it! I'm not the one in the wrong!"

"That's not what they said. They filed a complaint saying you called them to the special building and attacked them,"

It's exactly as I thought. But why would they do this? Was there someone behind them trying to hurt Class D?

A girl named Shinohara, Notorious among the boys for 'being a bitch,' didn't stop looking at Sudou with distrust.

"I don't believe him for a second. We all know how violent Sudou

is."

A few people nodded to her words.

"That's exactly why he was targeted. He's famous for his violent nature, so he would be easier to set up." suprisingly Niharu spoke up for him.

"

He told us everything that happened. Although he is partly to blame, Class C is lying."

Shinohara opened her mouth to speak again, but Chabashira-sensei started talking first.

"Well, that's good to know, but you will have to prove it. A trial will be held in a week's time. If you dont find a witness or any other evidence, Sudou will likely be suspended."

As she was talking, I observed how our classmates reacted closely. A girl I don't know the name of flinched at the word witness. It wouldn't be ideal if she was the one Sudou was talking about. Having a witness in our class means they has a reason to be biased, so her credibility in the trial won't mean much.

\*\*\*

"Shall we go, Kiyotaka?" Niharu asked me during lunchtime.

"Where are you guys running off to?" Haruka teasingly asked with a raised eyebrow.

"The place where Sudou fought the Class C students."

"Hmph. You guys aren't any fun. Well are you going to look for evidence or something, Sherlock?"

"Well, we have to prove Sudou's innocence somehow," I said, before waving goodbye to the rest of the group.

The special building is located on the school grounds, but placed as far away from the classrooms as you can get. Due to it's location and purpose, no students would go over there just to hang out. It's a good spot to do something without anybody noticing. As I entered I immediately noticed the lack of air conditioning. The heat was stifling.

"Hm, there really aren't any cameras," Niharu said, walking through the empty corridors with no cameras in sight. It's almost like the school gave it a lack of security on purpose.

"Whoever in Class C devised this plan is cunning. They've been taking the class competition seriously before it even started."

"Yeah. Reaching Class A might be more of a challenge than I thought," Niharu grinned excitedly.

As she says that, we bump into a girl with stawberry-pink coloured hair who was walking around a corner.

"Oh, hallo. Are you two on a date?" She suddenly initiates a conversation.

"This isn't the most romantic setting," I said, gesturing at our grey and dull surroundings.

"Haha, yeah, i was joking. Are you two in Class D by any chance?"

"How did you know?"

"My class, Class B, was notified of the incident too. Are you here looking for evidence too?"

Niharu frowned. "Why would a person from a class separate to both sides involve themselves?"

"It's just the right thing to do. Oh! Sorry! My name is Ichinose Honami by the way."

she seems to be a genuine and kind-spirited girl, similarly to Kushida. I couldn't sense any ulterior motive, and from a logical perspective, we would be more beneficial partners than Class C, so i decided to trust her.

"Im Ayanokouji Kiyotaka, and this is my friend Hasegawa Niharu. We actually just finished up here."

Her eyes widened.

"Oh! Didn't you guys break a bunch of sports records or something? You're both actually kinda famous."

"We are?"

Outside of my class, nobody has ever really talked to me about it. Although I suppose i don't get in contact with the other classes much.

She nods enthusiastically.

"Definitely. Anyway, did you find anything about the case?"

"There's no physical evidence, but we have a plan to save our friend. Class C is lying, if it means anything coming from my mouth."

"I believe you, dont worry," she pulled out her phone.

"Can I get your contact info? If I find anything useful then I can tell you."

"Are you sure you want to go to such lengths for us?" She wouldn't gain anything from helping us.

"Like I said, it just feels like the right thing to do." she shrugged.

Is she a simply a good person or is this a complex trap? I can't find any indication that she's lying. Niharu hands her phone over first, so i might as well do it too.

"Thanks. Goodbye, Ayanokouji-kun, Hasegawa-san."

\*\*\*

"You said you already have a plan to save Sudou. May I ask what it is?" She asked as we returned to the classroom.

"Yes. You know about the witness Sudou was talking about?"

"You mean Sakura?"

"Who?"

"The girl in our class with red hair and glasses. She doesn't have much of a presence."

"So that's her name then. Yes, I'm talking about her. I'll explain everything in class, just wait for the signal."

### **Niharu POV**

As the final class ended, Kiyotaka told me to wait and watch what he would do from behind.

As everyone filed out of the classroom, Kiyotaka approached Sakura.

"Hey Sakura. I was wondering if you knew something about Sudou's fight? Could you have any evidence?"

Her eyes started darting around the room in panic.

"Uh- Ummm... I don't..." her voice trailed off. Kiyotaka waited until the last person left the room and continued.

"It's ok. If you don't know anything then I'll take my leave," he threw a meaningful glance in my direction. It's now or never.

I pretend to be distracted on my phone and bumped into Sakura, while subtly pulling something out of her side pocket. The camera was there as Kiyotaka said it would be. I quickly 'drop' it on the ground and give it enough force to shatter the lens.

"Oh god, I'm so sorry!" I really was sorry. I still don't understand why Kiyotaka wanted me to do this.

She quickly picks up the camera and checks its condition. Her shoulders slightly slump when she sees the lens.

"I-it's ok..."

"No, it isn't!" I insist. "I have spare points from club activities, so I'll pay for the repairs."

"Don't... worry about it..." she says quietly, looking at the ground. If I'm too forceful, she might run away, so I just put my hand on her shoulder.

"I would feel terrible if I didn't at least do that. Please just let me pay for it,"

"I-" she stops.

"O-ok..."

"Great! Can I get your contact information? We can make plans that way."

She wordlessly hands me her phone.

"Thanks, and sorry again!" I said, leaving the classroom.

Kiyotaka's plan combined with my acting worked like a dream. We can't be beat when we're together.

### **Kiyotaka POV**

"I have to say I'm impressed. The act you put up and the way you steered her the way you wanted was good to watch," I say to Niharu

once Sakura was out of sight. We start walking back to the dorms together.

"So, can you tell me why I had to break that poor girl's camera?" She ignores my praise and asks me what we gained.

"When I asked her if she had evidence, she subconsciously glanced at her pocket. I've been watching her since the announcement of the fight, and she always puts her camera there."

"So your saying that the camera has proof of Sudou's innocence? Then why did i have to crack it?"

"You only had to break the lense. Now that you are paying for the repairs, you can take the camera, and then buy replacement for Sakura. Just say the storage was also damaged,"

All the dots connected in Niharu's mind.

"Ahh, I see now! I dont know why I ever doubted you, Kiyotaka!" Her anger and guilt from before completely vanished.

"I didn't think Sakura would step forward by herself, but if her camera had proof, then all we needed to do was get out hands on it. If she didn't give away that it had evidence then I wouldn't have given you the signal."

---

**Volume 2 is going to finish WAY faster than volume 1. Maybe 2 or 3 more chapters?**

**I'm proud of the plan Kiyotaka made, but it's nothing compared to what i have ready for the island exam. I was randomly thinking about it last night when my brain exploded and i got the idea. I can't wait to write it out.**

**-unusual-meet1984, January 16, 11:30 PM.**

**Edit: sorry if you got a notification of another part. I accidentally published it when i tried to save it.**

**Edit i fucking did it again sorry**

**"Good chapter 👍" ---Plubrock\_49**

## Volume 2 Chapter 2 - Obtaining Evidence

Tomorrow is Saturday, which is the ideal day to get Sakura's camera fixed. We should get the camera back two days before the trial if everything proceeds according to our plan. It's getting late, and Niharu and I are already lying in bed.

"Hey Kiyotaka," Niharu says, wrapping her legs around my waist and hugging my neck.

"Sorry, I like doing this for some reason. How many points are you going to blackmail from Class C?"

"Oh? Well I guess it isn't too hard to deduce. I'll obviously get the 80,000 for Horikita, but I'm not sure how many extra points we can ask for without them declining our offer."

While she's thinking, I add, "I don't mind what your doing, by the way,"

"That's good," she says, hugging me tighter, before offering her opinion on the matter.

"I'm thinking we take 50,000 points for each of us. It's more than enough for us to live off of and it won't be difficult for Class C to accept."

The amount she suggested was very reasonable, but I'm not going to aim low if i can go higher.

"Let's ask for an extra 20,000 points. That way the deal saves Sudou from his current predicament and also completely pays back for the exam scores."

"Ahh, so the deal basically negates every mistake Sudou has made for the last few weeks!"

"Uh-um-"

"Oh, sorry if you couldn't breathe. I got excited for a second there," she sounds the opposite of sorry.

"Yeah. Actually, can you text Sakura now? Ask her if I can come with you for the repairs."

"I'm too comfortable now. I can do it tomorrow."

I reluctantly pushed her off my back.

"You can do it again once you've finished."

"Hmph. Alright then," she grabs her phone and starts typing rapidly.

"And... sent. Oh, Ichinose also sent me something... she says she's sorry but she couldn't find anything."

"Just tell her we have the situation under control."

Niharu nods. "Indeed, we do."

\*\*\*

The next morning, Niharu and I were waiting at a fountain on the ground floor of Keyaki Mall, waiting for Sakura to meet up with us. It was only a minute away from the time we had planned.

"I don't know if this is important, but when i bumped into Sakura yesterday, i couldn't see any distortion in her contact lenses."

"It's not that important... but I am interested. Is she trying to hide her ture identity? Or maybe she just likes to?"

"Just forget it for now. 90 degrees to your left."

I subtly glance at where Niharu said, and found Sakura approaching us with a scarf covering the bottom half of her face.

"S-Sorry I'm late," she said, bowing deeply. I could see Niharu was right about her glasses.

"Now that you're here, let's not waste any more time," I say. Sakura meekly nods and points in the direction of the store.

"That way."

We follow her into an electronics store and get greeted enthusiastically by the store clerk. I excuse myself as he starts talking with Niharu excitedly.

Sakura told Niharu the name of the camera model through text message, so I know what to look for. The cameras and audio recorders are in the left corner at the back of the store.

Nope, nope... here it is. I found a model that fits the description and model name. All we need to do know is buy another one on the day the repairs are finished.

I go back to the counter to see Niharu frowning and Sakura shakily holding a pen in her hands.

"What's the problem, Sakura?" I ask. She doesn't answer. The form she has to fill out includes her dorm room number and contact information. Is she worried about thatt? The clerk is looking at her in a way that would make her feel uncomfortable.

"Let me do it," I take the pen from her and start writing down my information into the sheet.

"There aren't any legal problems if I do this. Just send the repairs message to me and I'll foward it to the cameras owner."

"But..."

I firmly push the sheet to his side of the desk, indicating that I'm not backing down.

"...I guess it should be okay," he says uncertainly.

\*\*\*

"Erm, t-thanks for what you d-did back there." I've gotten used to Sakura's stuttering by now.

"It's fine. I don't blame you for not wanting to fill in the sheet, and it's just faster if I do it," I say.

The real reason I did it was because if something goes wrong while getting a new camera, we can tell her that the repairs took longer than expected, and she will have almost no way to discern the lie. It was just a bit of insurance.

"I think I-I'll go now. Goodbye and thanks again," she bows deeply and starts walking away.

Niharu waves her goodbye and turns to me. "I know why you really filled in the sheet, but I'm still thankful Sakura didn't have to. That clerk was one of my least favorite human beings,"

"Was he staring at you? I thought that was normal from the guys in our class."

"That wasn't all," she replied shortly.

"Okay. We should probably get going. Remember we have to meet everyone to watch that movie?"

"Oh, I almost forgot! We need to hurry!"

"The cinema is literally less than a minute away. Do you really have to do this?"

"Hey!" Haruka called out to us. We went over to her.

"I still don't believe you two aren't a couple," she grumbled.

"Why's that?"

"She just dragged you over here by the hand! How do both of you not know this stuff?"

**Niharu POV**

Two days later, I went a separate path to Kiyotaka. I was picking up the camera, and he was 'doing something else'. If he ever says that, it means he has something planned. I walked into the electronic and saw the same clerk as before grinning as I entered. I didn't want to talk to him at all.

"Just be quiet and give me the camera,"

He looked at me with a mix of surprise and disappointment.

"Oh... ok,"

He ducked behind the counter and came back up holding Sakura's camera, with it's new lense shining.

"One more thing," I say shortly and go to the shelf Kiyotaka said the camera model was stored.

"Ah, here it is."

When I return to the counter, the clerk looked at me with curiosity.

"Why do you need to get that? What about the one that got repaired?"

"Just do your job," I said curtly. I didn't feel like a striking a conversation with this guy.



After I left the store, I bought a milkshake and started looking through the camera's storage. Sure enough, there was a blurred video of three boys provoking Sudou, before one of them throws a weak punch. This is exactly what we needed.

I scrolled a bit further and found a photo of a cheerful looking girl striking a pose. She had reddish-pink hair... is this Sakura?

"Hello," someone interrupted my thoughts. I looked up. Standing before me was a petite girl with silver hair.

"May I take that seat next to you?" She asked eloquently.

"Um... sure?" I've never seen this girl before. Why does she want to talk to me?

"When I heard your name and saw your face, I was unbelievably excited. To think you would enter this school, it must be fate," was this a confession?

"...After all these years, I finally found you again, Hasegawa Niharu." I doubt she would be aware of that place. I'll continue under the assumption she got me confused with someone else.

"Are you making a mistake? I don't think I've met you before."

"Oh, I'm quite sure. My name is Sakayanagi Arisu, but our meeting was one sided, just like the glass used to observe you."

My heart skipped a beat.

"How..." my voice was nothing but a faint whisper.

"Don't worry, your secret is safe with me. All I want you to do is help me meet the Masterpiece."

"You know K-Kiyotaka too?"

"Fufu, anyone who went to that place would know him."

"But..." I felt my composure cracking. I thought we left everything in the past when we entered this school, but it might come back to haunt us. I collected my thoughts.

"Do you want his contact information?" That sounded so improper in this situation. Her eyes widened a little.

"Fufufu, i wasn't expecting that. It sounds strange, having the Masterpiece's contact information. But I'll take you up on your offer," she seemed to agree with me. Someone nicknamed 'Masterpiece' and one of the 'Twin Demons of the 4th Generation' shouldn't be so easy to reach.

"Thank you, I enjoyed this talk," she said, and started walking off slowly. Only now did I notice she was holding a cane.

I called Kiyotaka immediately, and explained the situation to him.

"I didn't expect this," he said calmly. Maybe he was panicking on the inside? I doubt it.

"So what do we do?"

"We don't need to do anything yet. What was her name?"

"Sakayanagi Arisu," I said, remembering her creepy laugh.

"And did you get both of the cameras?"

I completely forgot about that.

"Oh, yeah, I'll bring them back to the dorm room now."

"Good job," he said, before cutting the call.

### **Kiyotaka POV**

Niharu entered the dorm with the camera hanging around her neck by the strap.

"You should be more careful with that thing. A lot is on the line here," I reprimanded, but she just waved it off.

"Don't worry. Nobody followed me or anything."

I sighed. "Well, can I see the evidence?"

"Sure," she hands me the camera.

"Look, it even has a video. Sakura did a pretty good job, I guess."

"Yeah. It even has good audio. Can you be the one to give her the spare camera tomorrow?"

"Well, that's just common sense."

She reaches into her bag and pulls out a few packets of chips.

"I thought we were taking a break from the sugar?"

"We are. But we have to reward ourselves from time to time, right? Let's watch a movie."

\*\*\*

The next morning, Niharu walked over to Sakura's desk. I was close enough to eavesdrop on their conversation.

"I'm really sorry, Sakura, but the place said the storage system was damaged as well. Did you have any important photos on it?"

"N-Not really."

"Phew, that's a relief. Once again, I'm really sorry, Sakura." She hands the camera over and returns to her desk. I sit down as well.

"Yo, Ayanokouji, Hasegawa."

Before i can congratulate Niharu, Sudou comes and starts leaning on my desk.

"The trial is coming up. I just want to ask how things are going,"

"Don't worry, Sudou. Our plan has gone smoothly and you will be free in bo time," Niharu said. Unfortunately, she was loud enough for a couple people to hear her.

"What kind of plan did you come up with?" Horikita asked. But instead of her showing her usual hostility, she had more curiosity than suspicion.

"Yeah, tell us, Hasegawa-chan!"

"Sorry everyone, but we cant. Otherwise Class C might find a way to counter it," I lied.

"Hey, nobody here would betray the class on purpose, would they?"

"It's not that we don't trust you, but if they started offering points then it would only be a matter of time," I said. Since most of the class is desperate for points, nobody argued. But even if Class C found out we had evidence, it wouldn't mean anything. It's just that we would lose Sakura's trust if our plan was revealed.

We got through our classes without anything notable happening and soon it was lunchtime. Our study group, as usual, meets up at Akito's desk since he's near the middle of the classroom. Before leaving for the cafeteria, someone walks into the class, out of breath.

"Oh, Ichinose-san! Do you need something?" Kushida called out to her. It seems like she is already acquainted with people in the other classes.

A few boys perk up at her words.

"So that's Ichinose? The rumors are true!" Ike doesn't even bother to keep his voice or eyes away from her. A few glares from the girls shut him up and stopped the other boys from adding anything.

Ichinose pretends not to notice.

"Hey, Kushida-san! I'm just here for a few people. Are Hasegawa-san and Ayanokouji-kun here?"

Everyone turns to us. I normally wouldn't like the attention, but this would make for a good cover story. If anyone asks us about our plan once the case is over, we can say we worked with Ichinose, and spare the details.

"I didn't know both of you were popular outside our class as well!" Kokoro says in awe. I think she doesn't have much knowledge in the social standings of the school.

"We aren't. Ichinose is just trying to help us with Sudou's case, that's all," I say loudly enough to carry across the room but still sound natural.

"Ohh, ok. Good luck Sherlock!" Haruka says and pushes me towards Ichinose. Niharu walks next to me.

"Hi Ichinose. Do you need something from us?"

"Kinda? I'm not sure. But can we talk about this at the cafeteria?" Her stomach rumbles to emphasize her question.

"Uh! Sorry!" She says with a blush on her face.

"It's fine. We can go now if you want."

\*\*\*

On the way to the cafeteria, Ichinose waved and smiled to countless people in the hallways, not giving her any time to speak to us. I guess that's the price of popularity.

When she saw us both buying a vegetable set, she frowned.

"I forgot your class has no points. I can pay for your lunches if

you want," she said. She really is a pure person through and through.

"Don't worry about us, this is only a one time thing. When the trial is over, we should get our points anyway."

She seems reluctant, but she accepts my reply.

"If you say so. Does that mean you really *do* have a plan for tomorrow?"

"I thought we say we did?"

"Uh, yeah, i saw the message. I just kinda thought you were trying not to get me involved," she said apologetically as we sat down.

"So do you mind telling me your plan?"

Niharu glanced at me. I shrugged.

"I guess we can tell you some parts..." Niharu said slowly.

"Oh, i understand if you don't trust me yet. Hold back any information if you feel like it,"

"That sounds good to me. Thanks. So-" Niharu lowers her voice and leans across the table.

"There was a witness of the fight in our class."

Ichinose gasps. "Wait, really? But that might not help much..."

"They have video evidence."

She gasps again. "Wait, so why hasn't this case been solved yet?"

Niharu glances back at me again, before telling an impressive mix of truths and lies.

"Since suspension and a loss of class points are on the table, we're going to use the evidence to negotiate with Class C to take down the complaint, so nobody ends up suffering,"

This is the one and only thing Niharu could do better than me. She judged Ichinose's character based on only a few interactions, then twisted the truth to fit her ideals, while still keeping the essence of truth to all her statements. The effect was obvious.

"Wow! That's great!" Ichinose's eyes lit up.

"We just chose the most peaceful outcome," Niharu hadn't even finished yet.

---

**I prioritized this chapter on my list of to do things today, so it's upload is much earlier than usual while still being around the same length as the other chapters.**

**You thought Kiyotaka was manipulative? Meet his best friend.**

**-Unusual-meet1984**

**January 17**

**6:40 PM**

**I'll get started on the next chapter immediately. I've been**

writing as much as i can since my break is over soon, so my uploads wont get faster than this, but you should still get updates every 2 days.

## Volume 2 Chapter 3 - The Trial

In only a few more hours, Sudou's trial will commence. Unfortunately, I hadn't managed to get into contact with any of the Class C students, so I have no choice but to aim to extend the trial before blackmailing them. I was going to let Niharu do the talking, since she has the skills to convince someone that white is black and black is white.

Without taking any chances, I put the camera with the evidence was kept in a shockproof case. On the way to school, I told Niharu the gist of what she had to say, and let her adapt in the moment if it is necessary.

I entered the classroom and immediately noticed a tense atmosphere. Sudou especially had an unchanging furrowed brow.

"Hey, Sudou. Remember that your safety is guaranteed."

"I trust you, Ayanokouji, but it's impossible for me not to be worried."

I suppose his fears were rational considering the consequences of making a mistake, but I don't make mistakes.

\*\*\*

The bell rang, indicating the end of class. I made eye contact with Sudou and gave him a nod. He gave me a thumbs up in return. It looks like he's calmed down a bit. Satisfied, I turned to Horikita.

"Horikita, do you want to come to the trial with us? The outcome will effect you."

"It will effect me? In what way?"

"You'll see."

She turned away. "If you can't tell me, then I have no interest in going."

"Suit yourself."

"...Okay. Luckily for you, I have some free time. I guess I could come along," she caved in.

We met up with Sudou and Niharu waiting for us at the door and started walking to the Student Council room. When we got there, all of the Class C students and their teacher were already inside.

### Niharu POV

I waltzed into the room with an air of confidence. I didn't even need to pretend, I knew that Class C was doomed from the start. Horikita was keeping up her cold but calm expression, and Kiyotaka

had his usual emotionless face. The Class C students started sweating when they saw us without a single hint of panic, minus Sudou.

I propped my legs up on the table and started tapping at my phone. My goal was to appear as relaxed as possible, because it will back up my words later.

At the exact time marking the start of the trial, a lean boy with sharp eyes and black hair entered the room with another girl who seems to be his secretary. He sits down in the chair at the head of the table. I notice Horikita stiffen beside me.

The boys gaze sweeps over all of us, analyzing our every move.

"Please fix your seating posture. This is a serious matter," he waits for me to do so before continuing.

"My name is Horikita Manabu, the Student Council President. I will also be the one to reach a final verdict in this trial."

I glance at the Horikita beside me. She is looking at the ground with a complicated expression. They must be related, but Manabu didn't pay her any extra attention.

"We will start by hearing the claims of Class C first, since they were the ones who filed the complaint. I don't want to here any objections from Class D while they speak."

Kiyotaka sends a meaningful look at Sudou. I was also worried about how he would react to Class C's false accusations. The boy in the middle of the opposite side of the table stood up.

"Uhm, so Kondou and I were just minding our business after club activities when Sudou tells us to go to the special building."

Sudou clenched his jaw, but didn't say anything. He must really be making an effort after realizing he was dragging the class down.

"Then, uh, we went over with our friend Ishizaki, and he suddenly lashed out, punching u-"

Sudou slammed the table.

"That's absolute bullshit!"

Nevermind. At least he tried his best. Chabashira-sensei, who had entered at some point, sighed in despair.

"I said not to disrupting them while they were speaking," Manabu said calmly. He nodded to the Class C boy.

"Please continue."

"But..!" Sudou closed his mouth, but his face was reddening from anger.

"R-Right. As you can see, he beat us up for no apparent reason," the boy said while pointing at his battered and bruised face. The teacher on their side took the opportunity to speak up.

"If I may speak, then I would like to suggest ending the trial soon. You can already see my students injuries, and that boy's savage

nature."

"Your input wasn't needed. To judge a case fairly, I must listen to both sides. Are you finished?"

"Yes, Student Council President."

"Good. Class D, you may now speak."

"First of all--"

"Don't worry, Sudou. Let me handle this," I say, standing up and gaining the attention of everyone in the room. I begin immediately.

"Horikita-senpai, you probably already know our stance on the case. I just want to say we have undeniable evidence that Class C is lying."

He raised his eyebrow at my statement. The other side of the table hosted several uncertain expressions. They couldn't tell if it was a bluff or not.

"May I just ask, what will the consequences be for the side that will be declared guilty?"

"The guilty side will be suspended for two weeks, and minus 50 class points. Why do you need to know?"

"Why don't we raise the stakes a little? Whichever side is found to be lying can be expelled. If their class is telling the truth, then they have no reason to decline this offer, right?" I look at the other side provocatively. They start fidgeting in their chairs, which didn't go unnoticed by Manabu.

"...I don't see any reason it should come to that," their teacher tries to stop me, but his attempt was a poor one.

"Why not? It would only be a positive aspect for you, as the side speaking the truth?" I look back at Manabu expectantly.

"It would be suspicious if they decline. Do you agree to these terms, Class C?"

With my claim of having evidence, along with my absolute confidence, their defense was rapidly crumbling. None of them knew what to say.

"Ryuuen-san told us to go through with it no matter what. We accept these conditions!" The boy named Ishizaki speaks up.

I'm impressed by his bravery, but he just leaked some extremely useful information. I make eye contact with Kiyotaka for a moment. Wait, did he just make a small smile!? Argh, I need to pay attention to the case. I'll think about it more later. I make a mental note of the name Ryuuen and speak up again.

"Okay. Now, everyone, what if I told you that I have a video of the entire incident on a camera back in my dorm room?"

At this point, the Class C students looked incredibly pale. I had announced it immediately after they accepted putting expulsion on the table.



"It's back in your room? Why didn't you bring it here today?"

"Uh, i kind of forgot. That's why I have a request."

"How could you-? Nevermind. What do you want to request from me?"

The other side of the table could be seen holding onto a glimmer of hope. After my previous statement, the chances of me bluffing has increased.

"Can you put this trial on hold? I promise I will show up with sufficient evidence tomorrow"

Manabu begins to consider it.

"Wait, you can't actually-"

"Silence, Sakagami. Us teachers are not meant to speak unless necessary," Chabashira-sensei interrupts him.

"Okay, I accept your request. But if you can't provide us with sufficient evidence, then I won't take it lightly during the final verdict," Manabu says.

"This meeting is adjourned for now. Meet here again tomorrow at the same time as today," he says, before walking out of the room with his secretary scurrying behind him.

Class C leaves next, with Ishizaki respectfully talking to someone on his phone.

"Don't worry Sudou, we didn't actually forget the evidence. This is all according to plan," before waiting for his reply, Kiyotaka and I hurry to catch up to Class C.

### **Kiyotaka POV**

I tapped Ishizaki on the shoulder. When he sees it's me, he flicks my hand away with irritation and continues to speak with the person i assume is called Ryuuen. I start to play the recording of the fight at the maximum volume, causing all three of the boys to suddenly come to a halt.

"Tell your leader i want to speak with him. Now," I say in a threatening voice.

"Uhh, Ryuuen-san, this guy wants to speak with you," he says to the phone before handing it over to me. Suddenly, he lunges for the camera in my other hand.

His approach was easy to predict and dodge, so i pivoted on one foot and lightly avoided his attack. Niharu quickly pins him down. I start talking into the phone as if nothing happened.

"Has your minion explained the situation to you yet?"

*"Yes, he has. But before anything else, who the fuck are you?"*

For such a smart and cunning person, I didn't expect him to be so aggressive.

"That doesn't matter right now. The point is you either call off the complaint and hand us 220,000 points, or your class loses 3

students. Which will it be?"

*"...Don't act so fucking high and mightily. Do you actually have any proof?"*

I held the camera's speaker up to the phone and pressed play. The sound of Ishizaki threatening Sudou could be heard. After 10 seconds, i paused the video.

"There is a video to go along with that. Will you choose to keep your points or your minions?"

*"...Kukuku, you really got me. I guess I have no choice but to pay up?"*

"Correct. Send the points to Ishizaki, and I will do the rest. I'm recording this conversation, so if you accuse us of extortion, we will file a complaint about all the false accusations against Sudou."

*"Kuku. Luckily for you, I have the points in my account right now, so I'll pay up. But remember, I'm recording this too, so if you don't hold up your part of the deal, I can drag you down with me."*

He sends the points to Ishizaki, and I send them to myself through a QR code.

*"Before you go, I'll just let you know... I'm going to fucking crush you."*

I payed no heed to his warning and dropped the phone on Ishizaki's back, who currently has his face pressed against the concrete floor.

"Let's go, Niharu."

\*\*\*

That night, everyone's points for this month were finally deposited. I was bombarded with texts asking about the trial, but i just left them unopened for now.

I transferred Horikita 80,000 points as promised, before sending 20,000 to Sudou as 'thanks for his cooperation', and finally 60,000 to Niharu. Everything worked out perfectly.

"You askes for 20,000 points extra than what we decided on. Why's that?" Niharu asks with a mouthful of expensive food.

"I just thought Sudou deserved a little reward for his *excellent* behaviour during the trial, and you somehow managed to make them agree to raising the price of losing to expulsion, I could afford to ask for more."

"Well, it was excellent behaviour for him," Niharu snorts, and then hums in appreciation of her food.

"I forgot what good food tasted like. Let's extort points for it all the time!" I could tell she was only half-joking. If I agreed, she would probably start doing it without hesitation.

Her expression suddenly lights up.

"Oh! Earlier before, during the trial, I saw you smile, Kiyotaka!"

I was surprised by her words. If I did smile, I don't remember it. Did i smile subconsciously? That's even more shocking. I normally

can't smile even if I tried.

"Look, there you are again showing emotion! I could tell that you were suprised!" She said happily. Me being expressive must be a big deal for her.

"That's nice..."

"Cmon, you have the ability to express emotions now, so use it!" She's being forceful about it now.

"Okay, I'll try to smile more often. Just stop talking about it."

"Okay!" She starts eating her food with extra vigor.

\*\*\*

The next day, while we are walking to school, a slightly familiar voice calls to us from behind.

"Hasegawa-san! Ayanokouji-kun!" Ichinose jogs up to us.

"Good morning, Ichinose," I said.

"Morning! I was wondering how the trial went yesterday. I've been dying to know ever since the school announced it last night."

"It went just the way we wanted it to. Class C took down the complaint and the school didn't punish anyone."

Ichinose revealed a beaming smile at my words.

"That's great! Actually, it wasn't the only thing I wanted to talk to you about," she said, changing the topic.

"Have either of you heard the rumours going around? Apparently the school is going to take us first years on a cruise at the start of the holidays!"

"Really? We haven't heard anything about that," Niharu says.

The school would never do such a thing for us students for the sake of kindness. The last time they did this, our class ended up with nothing after the first month. Ichinose clearly believes this too, and she wants to see if we catch onto it.

"This must be the start of the class competition then."

I don't see any reason to feign stupidity. Ichinose can't beat us even if she is aware of our intelligence.

"Ichinose, we can tell you're testing us. You aren't really hiding it properly," Niharu says.

"Oh... it seems I've been exposed," she said sheepishly, scratching her head. The conversation pauses for a moment, and Ichinose is saved by a friend calling out to her from behind.

"Coming, Mako-chan!" Before leaving, she leaves one final message.

"I can already tell you two are special. If you're curious, I didn't make up those rumors to test you. There's a possibility it will actually happen."

\*\*\*

Our conversation with Ichinose was pretty useful. Niharu and I

discussed it until we reached the classroom, when we prepare ourselves for a storm.

We opened the door, and-

"Hey! It's them!"

"How did you do it?"

"Why did I get so many points last night?"

It was more like a natural disaster. My ears felt like they would split from the sheer amount of questions being thrown our way.

"Everyone, calm down!" Hirata managed to get himself heard over all the noise. He is the best person for these situations, as most of the class became quiet immediately.

"Thanks, Hirata."

"No problem."

"Ahem. Sorry everybody, but we can't say how we did it."

Creating a detailed story based on lies takes a lot of effort and has a high risk involved. Sometimes refusing to give an explanation is much more effective.

"What? Why not?"

"Yeah!"

We just sit down at our seats and wait for the classroom to quiet down.

"You didn't give them an explanation, but do you mind telling how Sudou is free and you miraculously conjured 80,000 points out of thin air?" Horikita asks. Her eyes are narrowed a bit, but there is also a hint of respect.

"Nope."

---

**Wow. Two updates in one day. Or is it the next day since it's past midnight?**

**Time to get to Volume 3, the volume i want to write out more desperately than any other.**

**Again, sorry if there are a few grammar mistakes. I'll finish the editing later.**

**I don't have much to say, so bye for now.**

**-unusual-meet1984**

**January 17 (or 18?)**

**1:00 AM**

**"Nice chapter 🍷" --- Plubrock\_49**



## Volume 3 Chapter 1 - The Cruise

"Hm. I didn't expect to get sentimental, but it really is beautiful," Niharu said. We were currently standing on the deck of a luxury liner, gazing out at the glistening Pacific Ocean.

"I suppose."

"Ugh, at least pretend you care!" She playfully punched my arm.

"Yeah, this scenery is amazing!" Kushida said. She and her group were standing captivated by the extraordinary view.

"This is the beeeeeeest!"

It was Ike's turn. Instead of telling him to shut up, everyone just let themselves be taken away in the moment. Psychologically, scenic views are supposed to be calming, but I never expected it to be like this.

"We get to enjoy this for two weeks uneventfully, without any problems occurring," Niharu said with an eyebrow raised. I agree, the chances of that happening are zero.

"Hey, what are you two lovebirds doing over there?" Haruka called out to use with the rest of the group following from behind. I was technically the leader of the group, but Haruka does all the leading.

"Hey everyone. We were just saying there's more to the cruise than meets the eye," I might as well give them a hint.

"Hmm? Did you find something, Sherlock?" Maya successfully copies Haruka's favorite line.

"Hey! I was meant to say that!"

"What do you mean, Kiyotaka?" Akito asked, ignoring the girls.

"I won't say anything just yet, but be ready. Have you guys already made plans?"

"Oh! That's actually why we came to talk with you guys in the first place," Haruka said, giving up on trying to kill Maya. "I've made up a whole tour ready for once we get back from that private island."

That's right, our destination is an island owned by the school. Judging by the circumstances, that's when the class competitions will officially begin. I doubt we will stay there for a couple hours as the school claimed. As if on queue, an announcement was played over the ship's speakers.

"Attention, students. Please assemble on the deck. You will be

able to see the island soon. This is a good time to take in some rather significant scenery."

"Hah, I bet it will be significant," Niharu said.

"Yeah!" The comment went over everyone else's heads.

As the island came into view just beyond the horizon, a crowd gathered on the deck to watch its advance. Since we were on the deck before the announcement, we had the best view.

Some particularly domineering boys showed up and began pushing us out of the way in order to get the best position.

"Hey, you're in the way. Move it, you defects."

One of the boys try to pugh my shoulder and make me lose balance, but I didn't let myself move an inch. To him, it would be like pushing a brick wall.

"Uh..." he couldn't comprehend what was happening. Everyone looked at him in bemusement.

"Can you take your hand off me?" I ask, pretending to be confused. He wordlessly does as I ask.

"Uhm, let's go, guys," they walked off while asking the boy who pushed me questions.

"What was that?"

"Who knows. Let's get ready, the island is pretty close now."

However, the boat suddenly picked up speed and started circling the island instead instead of heading towards it directly.

I walk away from the group, and Niharu follows me. We end up on the other side of the deck, near a group of Class A students.

"You know what to do. Memorise everything you see on the island."

"Of course, of course. But look over there," she says, pointing at a bald boy in the middle of the Class A group. He was watching the island intensely with his arms crossed. There is no doubt he figured out the clues as well.

"That reminds me, there is something you should see. Sakayanagi has contacted me," I say, and pull out my phone.

The day before the cruise started, I received a message from an unfamiliar number. It says, "The baldy, Katsuragi, is extremely conservative."

I show Niharu the message. She slowly processes what this means.

"Sakayanagi seems to have also understood that this cruise will effect our class points."

"So why did she help us? It looks like Katsuragi is some sort of leader in their class. Maybe she wants to undermine that leadership? She didn't come on the cruise, after all," Niharu said thoughtfully. I think she hit a bullseye.

"It could also be a trap," I said, just to be safe.

"Maybe... wait, look over there!" She points at another cluster of Class A students separated from Katsuragi's group. I immediately understand what she is saying.

"So you think Class A is divided over who should lead the class?"

"Yup."

"That doesn't mean Sakayanagi is telling the truth."

"There's only one way to find out," she starts walking over to the second group. She asks a question, and the group starts scowling at her. Then she says something else, and the group seems surprised, and a tall blond haired boy says something back. She nods and returns to my side.

"That group sees Sakayanagi as their leader, and just the name Katsuragi riles them up. I don't think they're cooperating at all."

\*\*\*

After everyone had set foot on the island, Chabashira-sensei turned around like an instructor in a military drill.

"Everyone, get in line. I will now call the roll," she said forcefully, shocking a few of the students. Her actions shocked a few students, who still believed this would be a relaxed vacation.

"Uhm, sensei? Isn't this a vacation? What's going on?"

She didn't reply to a girl named Karuizawa's question, and started calling out names. Once we and the other classes were finished, Mashima-sensei, the homeroom teacher of Class A, stepped forward.

"It's time to commence this academic year's first special test."

### **Timeskip**

During the explanation of the rules, I mapped out and perfected the plan I was going to use in my head.

"So whose going to be the class leader?" Kushida asked. She was referring to the person who holds the key card for this exam.

I step forward.

"Everyone, I have a plan. I would like to be the leader, as both the card holder and the strategist."

Everyone started looking around, but nobody objected. I have gained a reputation in the class for my intellectual and physical capabilities.

"If there's anyone I trust when they say they have a plan, it's you, Ayanokouji!" Sudou said. His words resonated in the class as they remember the recent trial.

"I have no problem with it," Hirata said, and so it was unanimously decided that I would lead this exam.

\*\*\*

"Hirata, I'll put you in charge handling our S-points. The only thing I need is 3 cameras, right now."



"Hey, we cant just throw 15 points down the drain!" Yukimura said.

"I dont have time to explain, but it will end up with us getting more points. We need to hurry."

"If, you say so, Ayanokouji-kun. Chabashira-sensei, please get us 3 of these cameras as soon as possible."

She nodded and walked off, and I went over to Niharu.

"This is what I want you to do."

---

Pretty short chapter, but this is just the introduction to the exam. Next chapter will be the longest so far.

Thanks for the support everyone, I have 4.41k at the time of making this chapter, and it's only been like a week since I started writing.

"Nice chapter 👍" --- Plubrock\_49

"Please I want them to have wholesome sex now i will do anything" --- MakucchibiNotSmol

"XD" --- TimmyVoszi

## Volume 3 Chapter 2 - Beginning of the Island Exam

(A/N I hate making chapter names)

Niharu smiled.

"I knew I could count on you making a plan like this, Kiyotaka."

"Thanks. We don't have much time, and the majority of the work we have to do is in these first hours, so lets start now."

"Right!"

We both ran at full speed into the forest. I saw all of the other classes were still on the beach, so we weren't too far behind on schedule. The closest spot was next to an oak tree and a water source. Instead of claiming the spot, I nodded to Niharu and kept running past her.

The next spot, and my intended destination, was a hut near the middle of the island. There were a few fishing rods and canned food inside. After claiming the spot, I ran around looking for more places to get points, while leaving a few untouched. In total, the island had about 15 spots, and I claimed 9 of them in the first hour. So far so good.

Eventually I returned to the beach and found and found my class squabbling over something worth 10 points.

"We don't need to unnecessarily use points!" Yukimura spat.

"It's not unnecessary! You just wouldn't know since you're a boy!" Karuizawa wouldn't back down.

I should probably step in now before it gets to heated.

"I'm back everyone. I have a place where we can all set up."

"Hold up! Where the hell have you been?"

"I got us 9 points from the machine spots. One of them is in a tree grove, which we can use for shelter. Have we bought tents yet?"

Hirata, who had been trying to difuse the situation before, spoke up.

"Uh, sorry, Ayanokouji-kun. We haven't bought anything yet, but we have decided on what to buy."

"No, that is better. Instead of buying tents, are there any kind of nets?"

"Um, there is one here..." He looked perplexed at my question. I look at what he was pointing at. It was the kind of net that

fishermen drop off ships to catch large amounts of fish, but tied together like a wire mesh.

"That's perfect. Buy 3 of them."

Each net costs 8 points. With the tree grove we can keep shelter from any intense weather, so we don't necessarily need tents, as long as the nets keep out any insects.

I also made an order for two hammocks, since Niharu and I would be using the lodge since it's close to the middle of the island, and it also has a view over one of the cave entrances.

"Kiyotaka," Niharu whispered to me.

"Yes?"

"I saw you but those hammocks. If you only buy one, then you can save points,"

At first I thought she was reprimanding me for wasting points, and in the end she still technically was, but she just wanted me to only buy one.

"Good point," I say, changing the order.

\*\*\*

Roughly 10 minutes later, I began the walk back towards the grove, which I found during my time scouring for spots. The rest of the class was following me roughly 10 meters behind. Niharu sped up so we could walk side by side.

"Anything you want to say?"

"Not really."

"Okay. Then I'll start. Did you reach the cave in time?"

"Easily. Katsuragi reached the cave, as you predicted, and at around the same time you predicted. Even I can't understand your thought process here," she said with slight admiration.

"I guess I can explain that part. Remember what Sakayanagi sent me?"

"About how Katsuragi was extremely conservative?"

"Yes. If she was telling the truth, and he noticed the clues on the cruise ship, then where is the most likely place he would go? I also assumed he would get there later than usual because of the divide in their class. He would have to mediate any quarrels that break out,"

"Ah, when you say it like that, it seems kinda obvious. Don't worry about explaining Class B, I think I know what you did already."

"Okay. For some reason, Class C didn't choose the spot I thought they would go to. In fact, I don't even know where they are."

"Hm, that Ryuen sure is an interesting person."

"That's true. If my memory serves me well, I think the grove is on the other side of this hill," I said.

I remembered correctly. We stopped at the peak of the hill, looking down at the scenery below us.

"Woah..." our classmates were staring in dumbstruck awe. Just below us, the grove of trees formed a perfect omega shape, like it was man made. Since the school owns the island, that was probably the case. Beyond that, all of the beaches on the north-west were all visible, with a distinct line between the luscious forest and pristine yellow sand.

Even I was slightly touched by the sight. Ever since I came to this school with Niharu, my emotions have slowly crept to the surface of my mind.

I shake my head to clear my thoughts and we begin our descent into the grove. There were murmurs of approval once we reached the inside. The trees blocked out most of the sun, but it was still dimly lit. I decided to get straight to work.

"Sudou, I want you and a few other athletic students to start hanging the nets on the tree branches. Make a dome shape."

I'm glad Hirata is in the class, since he is willing to directly help and order the rest of the class. Keeping them in line is a tiresome task, and I had to get going soon. I turn to him.

"Hirata, I don't have much time. Just help everybody settle down. Maybe buy a few tarps for privacy."

"Right."

\*\*\*

Another advantage of using the dome shape is after the bottom of the net is pegged to the ground, it creates a closed system with only one entrance and exit. If another class was to break the nets, we could pursue them for obstructing our belongings, which the school strictly prohibited.

This allows me to attack the other classes while they are under the belief that we are playing defensively.

"Here it is."

"Oooh, I think it looks great, Kiyotaka!" Niharu and I were standing outside of the hut, but it would be better to call it a small lodge. 2 or 3 people could live inside it without it being too cramped.

"Yeah. Let's go inside. It already has enough food for us to last the week," I said.

The school assumed that the canned food would be taken back to the students' base camp, so they stacked it with enough food for around thirty people to eat once. Niharu and I are keeping it all to ourselves. If we skip a few meals we should be fine.

I set up the hammock.

"I'll be back later tonight."

"Okay, good luck! I might not be here when you get back, though," She says. After nodding, I leave the hut and close the door behind me.

Class B started on the most south-west part of the island, so I knew exactly where they would start exploring.

When I occupied the spot closest to them, I forced them to try a different route. The closest spots to their left and front were also taken by me, so they had no choice but to go to a small clearing to their right.

On the edge of the clearing, a cluster of bushes hosted a wide variety of berries. By influencing them into using the spot, I guaranteed they would attempt to find berries that are safe to eat.

I start to nimbly climb up a tree just next to Class B's set up. From what I can see, they used about 80 points worth of tents, toilets and other facilities. It doesn't look like they were planning to go after the class leaders, but to simply save points and get through the week.

It's getting close to sunset, so they should start to look for dinner soon.

"Are you sure these are safe, Shibata-kun?"

"Remember, you can call me Sou. I'm pretty sure you can eat them as long as you avoid the bright red ones."

"Eh, that's not exactly reassuring..."

"I wouldn't worry. I'm sure the school wouldn't grow poisonous berries on purpose."

"...I guess you're right. Let's get these back to Honami-chan before it gets late,"

"Yeah!"

How wrong that boy was. In my journey around the island, I found plenty of dangerous berries, though none of them were lethal of course. Now that I knew they would use berries as a food source, my work here is done for today.

Not only was my goal to get as many points as possible for my class, but it was also to take away as many points as I could from the other classes.

\*\*\*

Back in the cabin, I was resting in my hammock, passing the time. This was only the first day of the exam, and trying to get everything done as too quickly might be counterproductive.

"Yoohoo, I'm back," Niharu entered the cabin.

"That took you longer than I thought. What happened?"

"Class A had people guarding the entrance, so it was hard to get in."

"So how did you get in?"

"They worked in shifts. I listened into their conversations until I could tell that they were on Sakayanagi's side, and they welcomed me with open arms,"

"That makes sense."

"Yeah. The leader is Yahiko Totsuka, and I didn't even need the hidden camera to know. He left the keycard next to his sleeping bag!" She says, shaking her head in disbelief. Then she walks over to the hammock.

"Isn't this a bit small?"

"It's only meant for one person. You're just too used to the king sized bed."

"I mean it's way too small. I can't fit next to you."

"That's not my problem," I say, closing my eyes and relaxing. I was just teasing her, and was planning on giving the hammock to her when my breath is knocked away.

"Oof," I groaned. Niharu was lying down directly on top of me.

"It's hard for me to breathe if you do this, you know."

"That's not my problem," she closed her eyes and ignored my suffering. I guess I deserve it.

---

**I keep saying the chapters will get longer but I never get it done. I might split up each chapter into 2 days of the exam each.**

**Also THANK YOU SO MUCH we reached the 5k views milestone this fic was way more popular than i thought it would be.**

## Volume 3 Chapter 3 - Class B's Downfall

It was now the early morning, and I was preparing to make a trip to Class B's camp. From what I heard, Ichinose has at least some influence over the class. I can try to use my connection to her to enter if they don't accept me immediately.

Since Niharu was sleeping on my chest the whole night, my back has been all morning.

"Uhh," I groan as I try to stand up after eating breakfast.

"What's wrong?"

"I can barely move my back,"

Instead of handing me sympathy, she grins.

"Hmm, how could that be? You could've just slept on the ground,"

"Don't even bother. You begged me to stay when I tried to get up,"

"Hehe, maybe I did,"

I sighed. "Do you want to come to Class B with me? You have some business there as well,"

"Sure! I was actually planning on going tomorrow, but I might as well go with you," she said.

I did a trip around the Island, capturing of the same spots as yesterday. Class A had locked themselves away in the cave, Class B was just finishing the setup of their base camp, and Class C was so far nowhere to be found. For those reasons, none of the spots I went to were captured by another class.

Since I also had to go to roll call in the morning I took slightly longer to return than yesterday. Once Niharu got back, We set off to Class B's camp.

We timed our arrival for the time we estimated when Class B had fully woken up and started doing jobs. When we arrived, we found the class in harmony, doing work and laughing together. It was a far cry from Class D's constant fights.

"Ichinose!" Niharu called out. Ichinose, who was helping out in setting up a camp fire, turned around and waved.

"Hasegawa-san! Ayanokouji-kun! Do you have business with our class?" She asked as we walked closer. Nobody has any problems with us entering their territory.

"Well, we came over just to say hi, but I guess we do have some important information,"

A few of the her classmates were looking at us with curiosity, but

not suspicion. They seemed to all be kind-hearted and relaxed, just like Ichinose. That must be how their class united so quickly.

"Is there a place to sit down?"

"Oh, of course, just follow me,"

She led us towards a log on the edge of the clearing. I winced as I sat down.

"Are you alright?" She asked with a slightly concerned voice.

"I slept in a bad position, so my back is really stiff now. Don't worry about it,"

"It's not really a good place to do business, but it should work,"

"Don't worry about it. You really have a good setup going here," I said.

"I have to thank my classmates for that. Everyone puts in their best effort and gets along really well,"

"Don't just give credit to your class. They're working well under your leadership, aren't they?"

She looks surprised. "How did you know?"

"I guess I could just tell,"

I had suspicions because of the conversation I overheard last night, and she also had necessary leadership qualities, so I made a wild guess. Her class also seemed to respect her a lot.

"Heh, you have impressive intuition. Or is it more than that? Actually, nevermind. You said you had some important information to share, right?"

"Yes. We want to make a proposition. On this camera-" I point at the digital camera Niharu had taken from her pocket. "-We have evidence of Class A's leader. If you send our class 30 points worth of bottled water and food, we will show you,"

"Hmm..." she thought about it deeply before answering.

"I don't like the thought of making another class suffer, but I guess it's part of the competition. I will accept the offer if the evidence is foolproof,"

"Okay, show her the evidence,"

"Woah! Slow down there. Don't you want me to sign a contract or something to guarantee I so my part of the bargain?"

"Normally that would be the case, but it's just a hassle, and we think you're a trustworthy person,"

The truth is that even if she doesn't do her part of the deal, she will get zero points by the end of the exam. It is a trivial matter if we have to get water from somewhere else. By pretending this is a matter of trust, she will naturally trust us more as well.

"I'm flattered," she looks like she really meant it.

"I promise I will keep my side of the deal. May I see the evidence?"



I nod to Niharu and she shows a video of Yahiko carelessly scanning the machine, and being scolded by Katsuragi. Yahiko's name could be clearly seen imprinted on the side.

Ichinose's eyes widened in shock.

"How did you get such a good angle?"

"We just got extremely lucky. I know it might sound hard to believe,"

"If you say so... Well that certainly is foolproof evidence. I'll leave to make the order now, unless you have something else to say?"

"Nope, that was all. Thanks for doing business with us," I said. We all returned to the camp and Ichinose explained our deal.

"Are you certain this isn't some kind of trick?" A boy with dark hair asked. He was the first person in the class to question us.

"Don't worry, Ryuuji-kun. I can vouch for them without a doubt in my mind,"

The boy's doubts were erased.

"Well, if you say it like that, I can't help but trust them. Sorry if I offended you," he said, looking down. He seems to have a lot of faith in Ichinose.

"Don't worry about it. I haven't eaten breakfast yet, so is it ok if I take something small? I can pay you back with private points if you want,"

"Oh, you don't have to go that far. This clearing happens to have a lot of wild berries. Take as many as you want, we pretty much can't run out,"

"Thanks,"

\*\*\*

The berries were stacked on top of a massive platter, stored with other provisions underneath a tarp. Niharu stood directly to my left, concealing the holly berries in my hand.

I smoothly placed the berries while picking up a huckleberry at the same time. Holly berries contain the compound saponin, and when digested, it can cause stomach cramps, vomiting, and nausea. The perfect symptoms to force someone into retirement.

They may no longer trust me in the future if the plan works, but it would have already costed them hundreds of points.

"Thanks a lot, Ichinose,"

I nodded to Niharu and we disappeared into the forest. Once we were far enough, I leaned on a thick tree and turned to her.

"So, let's see what was recorded,"

"Before we look at it, just know I had to scale a massive tree while knowing they could get there at any minute just to put the camera in place, so be grateful,"

"Don't worry, I feel grateful enough. Just get on with the video,"

"Hmph. You don't sound grateful at all. Well, here goes,"

She spent a while skimming through the recording. It was a twelve hour time lapse, so it took a while.

"...Ah, I found it!"

The video showed ten Class B students huddled around the machine. It was a good strategy to get the use the keycard without revealing the leader, but they didn't consider any spying from above.

A small girl with short greyish-brown hair had their hand on the card. We could confirm her name tomorrow at the roll call.

### **Ichinose POV**

"Honami-chan! Come quickly!" I was called by Chihiro-san with a sense of urgency. Before I could ask her what was happening, she ran back the way she came.

I follow her to find a large crowd of people surrounding the entrance of a tent. Everyone saw me coming and made way for me.

"Mako-chan? What happened?" I find my friend lying down, with her face flushed red.

"...Ugh... I really don't feel well..." I've never seen her like this. She would usually crack a joke or wave it off, but right now she didn't seem to have any energy.

"...It's probably just a bad cold... i can stay on the i-"

"Absolutely not! You need to retire and get treatment immediately!" I won't let my classmate suffer to save a few points.

I hear a splattering sound behind me and see Sou-kun hunched over, wiping vomit from his mouth. Why is this suddenly happening?

"Sou-kun! Are you alright?"

"What does it look like, Honami-chan?" He said sarcastically, but not in an unkind way.

"...Do you know how you caught this sickness?"

They both shook their heads. Mako-chan barely has the strength to stand. I don't have any choice, I have to make them drop out.

"Uhh, Honami-chan?" Yume-chan called out from the side. I glance at her.

"You too?"

She was smiling guilty, and her complexion looked terrible. Three people getting sick at the same time? This wasn't a coincidence.

"Don't worry everyone, we'll get you back on the cruise as soon as possible," I assured them. It's bad that we have to throw away 90 points, but my classmates wellbeing is obviously our priority.

\*\*\*

On they way to the teacher's tent, we found a boy with a bruise mark leaning against a tree, panting.

"Are you alright?" I call out to him.

"Hm? Er... I'll be fine,"

"It doesn't look like it. What class are you in?"

"I'm in Class C, but they threw me out," he said. I frowned. This is the second time I've heard Class C's name in an incident and they seemed to be doing something awful both times.

"What do you mean they threw you out?"

"Honami-chan, we shouldn't leave him, but our classmates are our priority. Let's get them to safety first," Hamaguchi, one of the strong and dependable people in the class, reminded me why we came here.

"Oh! Right! I'm so sorry, but can you wait here? We have something urgent to do right now!"

"Erm... sure," he didn't know how to process this information. I didn't wait to see what else he thought of, because I turned lead our group towards the ship at a faster pace.

### **Kiyotaka POV**

Ichinose had taken a party of 6 with her to gonback to the ship. 3 people who had digested the berries, and people to support them while they walk. Since I new the path they would take back to the ship, I planned ahead and placed a trap.

Since half of their group will have laboured footsteps, it's more likely that they will trigger a trap with a wire than anything else. I decided to use a flexible but strong tree branch for the trap. When a rope is pulled, it tugs the branch lose, and it's potential energy from elasticity will cause it to shoot forward horizontally, hitting thr victim in the back.

I tested it the trap by walking into it myself, and judged that it would only be enough to wind someone, but if it hits someone's head, there is a possibility of unconsciousness. I was fine, though.

I was watching from the treetops as Ichinose and her party slowly edged closer to the trap. They seemed to be talking about a 'poor boy from Class C'.

When they reached the trap, the best outcome for me occurred. The person who reached ths wire first also happened to be the shortest person in the group. The branch hit the bottom half of her head.

"YUME-CHAN!"

The girl slumped on the ground, unconscious. At this point, Class B was in ruins. They would need someone to return to camp and get people carry her off the island.

With everyones attention focused on their fallen classmate, I slipped away from the scene.

### **Ichinose POV**

I don't understand what is happening. Yesterday, our class was in working in peace and harmony, and suddenly some divine being intervened and made everything that could go wrong, go wrong.

Someone had laid a trap in the woods. It's possible the school placed it, but I'm convinced this was a setup. I don't want to blame anybody without claim, but the most likely case is Class C.

There was a boy from Class C just minutes away from the trap, and they already have a reputation for underhanded tactics. If it was them who did this, I won't forgive them for harming my classmates.

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**Basically, Class B is in ruins now and they suspect Class C for what happened. The perfect outcome for Kiyo.**

**He's using way more direct and physical tactics for this exam since he can get away with it easily.**

**Next update might come later than usual.**

## Volume 3 Chapter 4 - Capturing the Cave

I returned to the Class D camp to find out that a lot of things had happened when I was gone. A girl from Class C named Ibuki was found outside the grove, and there was a debate about what to do with her. In the end, it was decided she would stay in the camp.

I heard about another Class C student found near Class B, and immediately knew she was a spy. Ryuuken has made his move.

Even though she was a spy, I wasn't going to say anything. I was busy and had other plans to set in motion.

"Hirata,"

"Hey, Ayanokouji-kun. I haven't seen you around here since the first day."

"I've been pretty busy. We should win this exam by a landslide," I said. He raised his eyebrow in scrutiny.

"I'm guessing you won't elaborate on that."

"Thanks for understanding. So, how are things going around here?" I said. He winced.

"Ah, not the best. Especially after Ibuki-san arrived. The class is always split on making decisions."

"I see. I'm guessing you're the peacemaker?"

"That's right. Kushida-san and I are constantly breaking up fights." He has dark circles under his eyes and a sullen expression. This must have been going on for a long time.

"I'm glad you're here. Without you I don't know where the class would be." I give him a bit of praise for his efforts, but it isn't enough.

"Depending on the results of the exam, I could say the same for you," he says with a slight smile.

"So what did you call me over for?"

"I want-"

"What do you mean? Of course not!" Another fight had broken out between Shinohara and Ike.

"Why is it always these two," he mutters before jogging towards them.

I follow him with a sigh.

"What now," Hirata asks with a strained voice. I can tell he is struggling to keep it together.

The other two also noticed this and quickly backed down. It looks like he could keep up his facade up until this point.

"Uh, I'm sorry Hirata-kun. I'll try to stop trying to fight him for now."

"Yeah," Ike followed up. He doesn't like Hirata much due to his childish jealousy, but he didn't want to get on his bad side.

"Hirata." I have to call again.

"Oh, sorry Ayanokouji-kun. You wanted to say something, right?"

"Yeah. Class B is going to give us two or three days worth of food, so don't pay for anything after tomorrow."

"Huh?"

"..."

"Did you say Class B will give us food? What happened?"

"Basically I made a deal with them. Their side of the deal was to spend 30 points on food for Class D."

Shinohara looks at me with suspicion.

"What was our side of the deal?"

"Don't worry, it won't affect us at all. Only Class A."

Now they were even more confused, but our conversation was interrupted by the sound of yelling near the entrance of the grove.

"Another fight?" Hirata asks listlessly.

"As a matter of fact, it isn't," I say. I see a couple boys taunting our classmates at the entrance. One of them was Komiya, one of the boys involved in the trial against Sudou.

"We should go check it out." We head over to the scene, and Komiya grimaces when he notices me.

"Why are you here?" I ask him coldly. He shivers slightly, but manages to recover.

"We have a message from Ryuen-san. He says come to the beach, where all of the fun is at," he says, motioning to a bag of chips in his hand. Then he points at me.

"And he especially wants you." He says, then he and the other boy walk away, with their job requirements fulfilled. A few classmates start inquiring about what he meant.

"The Class C leader wants to see you? Why would he?" Horikita, who was sitting on a log nearby, asks coldly. She seems to be in a bad mood.

"I think it's because I ruined his plans during Sudou's trial."

She frowns at the vague answer, but then suddenly gasps.

"And you never told me how you managed to pay me back for that exam question." She somewhat connected the dots. Our other classmates were listening to the conversation with interest.

"I'm impressed you found the correlation, so I'll confirm those events have something to do with each other, but I won't reveal any more."

She didn't seem satisfied, but didn't press any further. At least she

no longer suspected me of working with Class C.

"Are you going to go? It might be some kind of trap," Sudou, who was being provoked by Komiya, asked. He has experience with being caught in a trap by their class.

"Don't worry, I won't fall for anything. Now if you excuse me, I should go find Niharu."

\*\*\*

After having lunch, Niharu and I walked to the beach Class C had set up on, as Komiya requested. I knew Ryuen used strange tactics, but this is something else.

Compared to Class B or D's camp, this class had spent almost a third of their points just for shelter, and I could see crates of processed food inside a storage tent.

"What is this..." Niharu watched in wonder as a jet ski flew past the beach at a dangerous speed.

"Oi! You two!" A boy with magenta hair was relaxing in a lounge chair underneath an umbrella. He flipped his avatar sunglasses onto his forehead and beckoned us over.

As we got closer, the boy whistled.

"Ishizaki! You useless shit! Get me a cold drink."

"Of course, Ryuen-san! Sorry!"

Like an obedient pet, Ishizaki ran off to fulfill his master's wishes. Ryuen turns to us.

"So you're the bastard that stopped my plan, eh?" He narrowed his eyes. "Your lucky I'm in a good mood today, or I would beat the shit out of you."

Niharu started giggling. Together, we had tag teamed against professional fighters, and never lost once. The idea of one of us losing to a first year highschooler was too much for her.

"Bitch, what are you laughing at?"

"Haha, It's just that you're threatening him as if you could win."

Instead of being offended, he widened his eyes.

"You think you're a good fighter, huh? I'll give you a match some time." I expected him to challenge me here and now, but for some reason, he doesn't want to fight.

"What do you need from us?"

"Kuku, I just wanted to see the person who defeated me. I'm not disappointed, but I don't feel excited either. You can leave now." Then he turns his attention to Niharu.

"However, you can stay."

"Why?"

"You're pretty sexy. How about I set up a tent for just the two of us later?"

"No thanks. But I'm curious about your plan for this exam. Do you have any points left?" She was unaffected by his harassment.

"Kuku, you're an unusual woman. Our plan is to simply enjoy our time here. All the other classes eating shit and bugs for a few points is sad," he sneered. Then he looked over his shoulder.

"Ishizaki, what the fuck are you doing?" Ryuuken seemed to love using foul language.

"Sorry, Ryuuken-san!"

Ishizaki came running with a soda can in his hand. He bowed before Ryuuken and held the can out with his head down. All he got in return was spit in his hair.

Ryuuken didn't even bother to open the drink. Instead, he just left it next to the radio. Niharu has been eyeing since we first got here.

It was now clear to me what Ryuuken's plan to get extra points was. He didn't want to fight me because he wants to stay in peak physical condition to stay on the island alone. This means he or one of the spys are the leaders of the class.

However, I knew I couldn't see the full picture. I was missing an important piece of the puzzle. I doubt he would settle for roughly a hundred points in this exam just so his class could enjoy a few days here.

But I don't need to ponder it right now. Class C is my second priority on my hit list right now, and I should focus on number one. After a few more minutes conversing with Ryuuken, or more like needlessly receiving explicit insults, we left set part three of our plan into motion.

The first thing I did was run around scanning all of the machine scanners on the island. I had done it twice a day every day, so we had 54 points from finding spots in only the first three days.

It would be ideal if someone saw me taking the spots, but so far nobody had. I would have to reveal myself as the leader in another way.

\*\*\*

After midnight, Niharu and I stood outside the entrance to the cave. It was Class A's turn to go up in flames, and this time I wouldn't be subtle about it.

"The 8 hour timer for the scanner should be finished by now. Shall we go?"

"Sure."

I pulled back the curtain of the entrance and we stepped inside.

We passed the sleeping students in silence, methodically and swiftly sneaking past them, completely erasing our presence.

"How can I be sure you won't betray me, Ryuuken?"

A deep voice resonated around the cave, but it wasn't loud



enough to wake up any of the other students.

"Fucking hell, baldy, I knew you were cautious but at this point it's ridiculous. Do you want to sign a fucking memorandum?" Ryuuen's slightly louder, sarcastic voice reached my ears.

Ryuuen making a secret deal with Class A is surprising, but it's not like I didn't foresee it happening. This must be the missing puzzle piece to understanding Class C's plan.

"Actually, that would be ideal." The other person, who I assumed to be Katsuragi, ignored Ryuuen's offensive comment. Niharu and I got close enough to them to perfectly understand what they were saying.

"Well, I knew you would ask for this, so I already have the paper here. If every Class A student supplies 15,000 points to Class C each month, then Class C will use 150 S-points to fund Class A during this exam."

"...Three days have already passed since this exam started. We don't need 150 points. If you change the fives into zeros, I'll sign this contract."

Katsuragi lowered the value of the deal to 100 points worth of goods in exchange for 10,000 points from each Class A student every month. Since we are almost halfway through the exam, Katsuragi's proposal makes sense.

"Kuku... I don't think you'll go any higher. We have a deal," Ryuuen said, scribbling the numbers on the contract. They firmly shook hands and Ryuuen left the room they were sitting in.

We hugged the wall and waited in silence as he walked straight past us, obvious to our presence. He had an evil grin, muttering 'kuku' as he went. Katsuragi may not know it yet, but he just signed a pact with the devil.

A few minutes later, it was Katsuragi's turn to leave the room. He didn't look worried about the deal he made with Ryuuen at all. If you look at the bare numbers of the deal, both of them gained from it.

He left to go to the tents on the opposite side of the cave, which wasn't too close to the machines location. This was the ideal set up for us. I nodded to Niharu, and gave her the hammock, and I went over to the machine and slid Class D's card through.

"Are you done yet?"

"Yep, I'm waiting for you now, Kiyotaka."

She had connected the hammock to the cave's wall and an artificial pillar closer to the middle.

"You get in first."

"Hah, you just don't want to hurt your back again, do you? Well, unluckily for you, I'm not doing that."

I *am* the heavier person out of us, but barely. If someone should get in first, then logically it should be me. I sigh.

"Fine, you win this time," I say, and climb into the hammock. She smiles and slowly gets in after me.

\*\*\*

I wake up to a lot of yelling and confusion. Haruka taught me the 'implications' of sleeping together but I still don't understand why it causes so much havoc. I'm not complaining, because causing havoc was one of my main goals.

Niharu and I tried to ignore the sounds and sleep in, but we were forced to respond when someone tapped our backs. Niharu got off me and I sat up. Katsuragi was standing in front of us with a disgruntled expression.

Behind him, several girls were blushing and looking away. Most of the boys were frowning, but some of them found the situation hilarious.

"Do you need something?" I asked him as if there was nothing strange about the situation.

"Why are you sleeping in the cave? It belongs to our class," he says, trying to keep his composure. He couldn't stop his voice from slightly cracking, though.

"What do you mean the cave belongs to your class?"

"The school has rules over the occupation of- wait. Yahiko, please go check the machine."

Yahiko, who I recognize as the person who holds the leader card, doesn't move.

"Yahiko!"

"Right!"

He scrambles over to the machine, with and gasps in shock.

"It says it has been scanned by Class D!"

It has occurred to Katsuragi what our plan was.

To make Class A even more surprised, Niharu suddenly pushes me back into the hammock and hugs me. I closed my eyes, but I could still hear all of the screaming.

\*\*\*

Eventually, everyone was silent except for one person. His laughter echoed through the cave and rebounded off the walls.

"Bwahahaha! So you walked straight into an enemy classes camp, take control of the spot, and then sleep with some girl inside of their base?" The boy who said it was tall and had blond hair. I recognized him as one of Sakayanagi's supporters. Tears of laughter were streaming down his face.

"Wait, so one of these two are the leaders of their class?" A few other students recovered from their shock slightly and realized what

all of this meant.

"You mean this?" I say, pulling out the leaders card. Everyone was suprised again, but not to the point of yelling and chaos.

"I recognize the name! He's from Class D!"

More muttering could be heard around the cave. This is exactly what we wanted. All we have to do is hold our ground and stay in the cave, and Class A will start to wane. They couldn't take back the cave, since we would be able to see their leader, even though we already know it.

---

Again, I hated myself while writing the reaction scene. But I know some of you like those scenes and it's all part of the path to victory, so I endured it.

I'm really happy with how the Island exam is going. I shouldn't be the one to say it, but I think I made one of the most unique adaptations to it.

I'm looking for reviews and advice for my writing, so if you wanna help, then that would be great.

"Ichinose the shounen sis" -Jayemiya

Edit: Wow we're at the top of the Ayanokouji tag now?



## Volume 3 Chapter 5 - Class A's Predicament

I waited for roughly two hours until the machine's timer had reset again. Some of Class A watched me with helpless despair as I took there home base as my own, and also bewilderment as to why I revealed myself as the leader so carelessly.

The moment I took the spot, I spoke up, and said the exact words they hoped I wouldn't say.

"You have all been here long enough. Since this is Class D's spot, all of you need to move out at once."

"Hey! H-He can't do that, can he?" Yahiko asked nobody in particular. Katsuragi hung his head.

"Unfortunately, Yahiko, he absolutely can. Everyone start packing up the food and tents, we have to find another spot,"

Class A was about to feel even more pain.

It took them a while, but Class A managed to get most of their stuff out by the time I finished my late breakfast.

As they set off, the weight from the hundreds of litres of water and other necessities wore them down quickly.

Niharu and I followed them through the treetops, swing from branch to branch effortlessly. If we maintained a 25 meter gap from them, then we could observe their progress while not being noticed. I could see some of them were already panting.

"Hey, Katsuragi-kun! We found a spot!"

At one point, they had to send scouts ahead so they didn't waste energy going in the wrong direction. One of them had found the closest spot, and quickly told the rest of the class.

A few of them cheered, but most of them were too tired to do anything except continue walking.

Niharu grinned evilly.

"I can't wait to see this!"

"Keep your voice down."

The spot was placed at the foot of a tall tree. If Niharu wants me to be theatrical, then I might as well do what she wants.

We quicken our pace to catch up with Class A. Since they are moving so slowly, it doesn't take long. Niharu stays in one of the nearby trees as I silently descend above the machine.

"The spot hasn't been taken. Can some of you spread out and make sure they didn't follow us here?"

Before anyone replies, I drop from one of the lowest branches and land standing upright. They all gasp in shock, and I can hear Niharu's muffled giggles somewhere to my right, but Class A is all too focused on me to notice her.

I barely glance at them before swiping the card through the machine. They all looked at the timer tick from 8:00:00 to 7:59:59 to 7:59:58 in deathly silence. All of their efforts had gone to waste.

Hashimoto, who was sweating profusely, managed to crack a smile.

"You really waited for us to carry all that stuff just to take our salvation away in front of our eyes?"

I tilt my head.

"What do you mean? I'm just collecting the bonus point I get for scanning it."

Yahiko's face was boiling with rage.

"You obviously did that to attack us, you bastard!"

Niharu was cackling at this point, and some students were looking around for the source of the sound.

"There is one more spot about 15 minutes from here. If you give me 100,000 private points, I will let you occupy it," I say. I wasn't planning on doing this, but in the moment it made sense.

"Huh? Should we just allow him to take our points like that?" One girl asks.

"The next spot will take you an hour to reach. You either pay up or sleep in this forest. I can see you don't have the stamina to go anywhere else." I mercilessly crushed their hopes, without leaving any chance to fight back.

"You're Class A, surely you have enough points?"

"..."

They're starting to realize that as a class the price was almost nonexistent. They should all have around 200,000 points if they spent their points wisely, and with 40 people in the class, it wouldn't impact their way of life at all.

Katsuragi speaks first, addressing his classmates.

"This proposition doesn't harm us if we all divide the payment among everyone equally. I think we should accept this deal."

Unlike the deal he made with Ryuen, he decided to involve his classmates in this one. It's probably because they're aware the deal exists.

"Hah, let's just get this over with," one sighs.

"Yeah!"

"Can we make a contract to ensure this deal?" Katsuragi asks. He

always wants 100% certainty in negotiations.

"After you take the spot, I'm the only one who needs insurance. I don't think you're the kind of person the betray me, Katsuragi."

He stroked his chin.

"Yes, I suppose you're right. I'll give you the points on the ship."

"Good," I said shortly, before walking back in the direction of the cave, ignoring the glares of the class.

\*\*\*

"You know, once you finished talking to them, I was hoping you would suddenly jump and climb the tree again."

"So jumping out of it wasn't enough?"

"Haha, well, I guess it was. Anyway, what are you gonna do with those points?"

"I'm won't get those points, because I'm not fulfilling my side of the bargain. I'm just getting their hopes up again."

100,000 points was a good number to ask for. It sounds like it's an easy task to fulfill as a class, while also being realistic enough for them to not be suspicious I would turn my back on the deal.

"Ahaha! Oh my god Kiyotaka, you can be really cruel sometimes," she said. It's hard to interpret it as a compliment, but that's what it was.

"Thanks, although I think you're much more sadistic than me."

She smiled happily. This conversation wouldn't make much sense from an outside perspective.

"Anyway, I prefer the hut over the cave, so I'll go back there to eat lunch. Once you're done with Class A, meet me there."

With that, she waved me goodbye and started traveling in the opposite direction. Now i had to hurt Class A one more time. Without any place to go, they will be forced to camp in the forest.

The forest is dense and has almost no even ground. The only viable places to camp are near machine spots or on the beaches, which they wouldn't be able to reach with all of the extra luggage they're carrying.

"Here it is!"

It seems they finally found the spot. This time I don't need to be so dramatic. I walk past the class, which was currently panting from overexertion. They all watched me, probably wondering what I am still here for.

"Sorry, Katsuragi. The deal's off."

"Huh?"

"Wait-"

I calmly scan the spot. One boy, who was carrying a particularly heavy crate of water, fell to his knees. Even Hashimoto didn't show any amusement.

"Why is that?" Katsuragi asked, rubbing his eyes in confusion and frustration.

"I was never planning on doing the deal in the first place. Now stop wasting time and find a place to set up."

"Hey, come back!"

I ignore their calls and cursing and walk back the way I came. One of them tries to trip me, which I easily dodge. I think I'll have soup for lunch.

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After returning to the cabin as Niharu instructed, I reported to her what happened.

"...Class A is finished. If things keep up with how they are now, then some of them might even drop out from exhaustion."

"Wow. Out of all the classes, Class A has it the worst, in my opinion," Niharu said, popping a berry into her mouth.

"Even worse than Class B? They literally got poisoned and I knocked one of them out with a tree branch."

"Oh? You didn't tell me about that last part! Well, it still doesn't change anything. Class A has nowhere to go."

It would be extremely difficult for Class A to survive the rest of the exam without any way to make a base.

"Hm, I suppose it would be hard not even having a place to set up a tent..."

"Are you showing sympathy for them?"

"Maybe I am."

She raised her eyebrows at my words. She probably expected that I would deny it. The truth is, I might feel sorry for someone, but I prioritize Niharu and myself over anything. I wouldn't do something for someone else at my own expense.

"If it's true, then That's a good thing, I think."

"Mhmm."

"...Do you feel like visiting our classmates any time soon? They've probably fallen apart by now."

"Hm, I guess we can return tomorrow. We have to get rid of Class C, after all."

"Ah, I see. Are you just gonna scan the grove's spot in front of that spy? I don't know how smart Ryuen is, but he might not fall for it."

"If he falls for it, we gain 50 class points, and if he doesn't, we don't lose anything. There isn't any risk involved. And that isn't all."

"Oh?"

"Can you go to Class B's camp and explain that Ryuen is the leader? I'm sure you already figured it out."

"Haha, of course I have. But why help Class B?" She asks. I'm a bit disappointed she didn't work that out yet.



"It will make them doubt the fact that we are responsible for the poisoning. And if we sell Class B's leader to Class C, then it cancels out and neither one gets anything."

She looks up at the ceiling in thought, doing some mental calculations.

"...Heh, I'm pretty sure Class D will be the only class to get more than a hundred points."

"That's guaranteed. But who knows, maybe we'll be the only class to get more than none."

"Haha, I'm proud of us, Kiyotaka."

"Me too."

## **Niharu POV**

As Kiyotaka requested, I went to pay a visit to Class B in the clearing. On arrival, I immediately noticed everyone looked more sullen than usual, and the lively conversations we witnessed a couple days ago had ceased.

"Hey, Hasegawa-san." Ichinose asked without energy.

"Hey! She might have something to do with the others being hurt!" The boy whose first name is Ryuuji said.

"Don't worry, I know. Let's see what she's doing here first."

"Hurt? Wait, there are less of you than there should be... did something happen?" It's time to put my signature acting skills to the test. I can already see Ichinose showing signs of doubt.

"...In case you really don't know, then yes, something happened. But why did you come here?"

"Um, please tell me the details if you decide to trust me. I came here to warn you of Class C's plan."

"What? You know their plans?" Ichinose asked before the other boy could say anything.

"Yes! Have you seen any Class C students nearby recently?" I asked. Kiyotaka told me they were talking about meeting a Class C boy, so beginning with this would give me credibility.

Ichinose and the other boy share a glance, unsure of what to say next. After considering it, Ichinose replies.

"As a matter of fact, we have. Why?"

I don't miss a beat.

"They've sent spies to the other Classes. Recently, a girl from Class C showed up and started to sabotage us when we took her in," I lie. As far as I know, that girl hasn't done anything yet.

When I say sabotage, the first thing they can think of is what happened to them two days ago. They will subconsciously link the incident with Class C, and since they would have already suspected them, they might completely forget the possibility it was us who

damaged their class.

The two share another glance, at a loss for words again. The boy now doesn't know what to believe, but he might trust me with a bit more encouragement. Since they aren't replying, I'll continue to build their trust.

"Have you guys visited Class C's camp?"

"Oh, we have. I don't understand what they were thinking while wasting so many points, but I'm guessing you do?"

I nod with conviction.

"Once they burn through all of their points, they will all return to the cruise ship. They won't lose any points from retiring since it's not possible to go into the negatives."

Ichinose's eyes lit up.

"Ah! Of course! Why didn't I think of that?"

"Except..."

I leave a gap in my sentence to gain their full attention.

"Ryuuen and the spies will stay on the island. The leader has to stay around to guess the other leaders, which means..."

I let them fill in the blanks.

"Wait, so their leader is Ryuuen or one of the spies?" The boy puts it together first. He seems like a capable right hand man for Ichinose, although he doesn't have the same style.

"Exactly. And we went through the belongings of the spy in our class, and they didn't have the leader's card."

"So... its between the spy for our class, Class A, and Ryuuen?"

"Not quite. Ryuuen made a deal with Class A and he didn't send a spy to their camp."

"Really? How did you get this information?" The boy asked, trying to stay vigilant and look for flaws in my explanation. He still wasn't willing to trust me trust yet.

"Believe it or not, we infiltrated Class A and overheard the deal being made. The rest of the class was asleep, so it was easy to get in."

"Didn't they set up in the cave? And you just walked through the entrance? And they didn't have anyone on guard?"

Ichinose put a hand in his shoulder.

"Ryuuji-kun, stop it. We can trust her now," She said gently.

"But-"

"Yes, That's what happened. I won't blame you if you choose not to believe me, but I don't want you to make a miscalculation with who their leader is," I say understandingly. If I go at the same pace as them, it would seem like I'm trying to pressure or convince them less.

"Hmm... just continue speaking for now, and I'll decide what I

think about it after," he finally says, accepting my words.

"Anyway, that leaves it with a 50-50 chance, right? Ryuen and the spy for our class," Ichinose prompts me into continuing.

"Well, technically it's a 50-50. But with common sense you can almost guarantee that it's Ryuen."

"Really? How so?"

"First of all, he doesn't trust his classmates like you do. His leadership is based on tyranny, so betrayal could happen at any moment."

Ichinose frowns. She's having a hard time understanding the concept of a class bound together with something other than trust.

"Also, even if he could guarantee they wouldn't betray him, it would still be too risky to give the card to somebody constantly interacting with another class."

After more consideration, the boy offers his thoughts.

"...I understand what you're trying to say, but That's all just speculation. It's still possible that it isn't Ryuen."

"That's not the end of it. When we visited his beach, he had a radio next to him, confirming he's planning on staying on the island."

"Hmm... That's a very sharp observation."

"Thanks. I have one more thing to say. When you went to Class C's camp, what did you notice about Ryuen's personality?"

Ichinose shivered.

"The way he treated his classmates was terrible... that poor boy Ishizaki did his best..."

"That's right. He's extremely cruel and violent," I say, building up to my last point.

"How does that suggest he is the leader?" The boy asks, wanting me to get to the point.

"We already knew about his nature before visiting the beach, thanks to that trial. But when we got there, he didn't want to fight at all. He wanted to save as much energy as possible." I finish my speech against Ryuen. Each piece of evidence didn't mean much, but if you put them all together, it makes a convincing case.

"Anyway, that's all I came here to say. I'll be going now."

"Wait! Why did you help us like that?" He asks. Without realizing it, he has started to believe that I was attempting to help them.

"Class C has caused us a lot of trouble, so we want to get revenge, and we see Class B as allies. Oh, that reminds me, can you please tell me the details of what they did to your class?"

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**Sorry about having to reupload the entire story. I went on a**

trip, so I used my phone to edit the story, and I messed up and unpublished everything.

I finished learning "Canon in D" on the piano, and thought, what should I do next? Of course, I'm now learning the first sections of Fur Elise, just like our boy Kiyo.

Bye for now!

## Volume 3 Chapter 6 - The End of the Exam

After instructing Niharu to go to Class B, I returned to the grove to see how the class was going, and it didn't look good.

Ike was sitting near the edge, ostracized by the class, while crying. Yamauchi seemed to be trying to comfort him.

"Kiyotaka! Where have you been?" Maya calls out to me. Haruka, who is standing next to her, perks up.

"Where?" She asks aggressively.

"Over there..." Maya points at me nervously. Haruka's gaze locks on me like an eagle. Have I done something wrong?

"What the hell have you been doing this whole exam? I've seen you like twice the whole week! Did you and Niharu run off to some-"

Thankfully, Maya grabs her and covers her mouth before she says anything too obscene.

"Hey guys, sorry we haven't been around. We've been doing some things against the other classes."

After tearing Maya away from her, talks with less anger than before.

"Is that all you're gonna say?"

"Well, I'm done explaining what we've been doing. But can you explain what happened here?" I ask, gesturing to the crowd glaring at Ike from across the grove.

"That pervert did something disgusting!" Shinogara, who was standing close to us, interrupted. Judging by Ike's personality, I wouldn't be surprised if he did something to get on all of the girls' bad side.

"I guessed it was something like that."

"Yeah, but it's worse than you can imagine!"

Haruka and Maya nod to her words. It must be pretty bad.

"What exactly did he do?"

Shinohara looked down awkwardly.

"Um, so last night, he went through Karuizawa's belongings..."

"Mhm?" I prompted for her to go further, but she didn't want to continue.

"It's fine. I'll go ask the perpetrator."

I walk closer, and Ike looks up at me through a blur of tears. Snot is running down his nose, and his hair was unkempt. He looked like

a mess.

"What happened?"

"I swear I didn't do it! Ayanokouji, you saved Ken, so save me now!" He screeches and grabs my collar to plead.

"Get off me. I just want to know what happened." I'm getting tired of asking the same question.

"Karuzawa's underwear was put in my bag! And I swear I didn't put it there! Please, Ayanokouji!" He doesn't let go of my collar.

"Shut up! It's obvious you took it!"

The class started yelling at him again. I use the time to push him away from me and look at the Class C girl. She's watching the situation unfold neutrally.

From what I could see, Ike was telling the truth. One of the only main suspects left is the girl, who I believe is called Ibuki. But I'm not going to say anything. If I side with Ike, I might get into fights with my other classmates, which I don't want. I also simply don't like Ike.

"Sorry, Ike, but the all of the circumstances in this situation suggest otherwise. I can't help you."

I walked back to my spot next to Maya while ignoring his pleas.

"I almost pity him," she said when I returned, watching Ike go through another breakdown.

\*\*\*

Eventually, once the scene Ike made was over, I walked over to Ibuki. She glanced up at me and feigned disinterest.

"It was you, wasn't it?" I asked, but I already knew the answer.

"What do you mean?"

"I can tell Ike isn't lying."

"Oh, you think I did something disgusting like that?" She stared at me directly at the eye as she was talking.

"That's exactly what I think."

"Tch. If you want me to say I did, then give up. I definitely didn't do it," she said firmly.

In the white room, I was taught to discern the smallest lie, even if it is mixed with a hundred truths. I could easily tell she wasn't being honest.

I pretend to give her the benefit of the doubt, and got up. With her attention on me, I chose this time to walk towards the grove spot. All of the class' belongings were at the camp on the opposite side of our camp, so she would be curious as to why I walked over there.

I felt her gaze on my back as I went. I don't need to do any extra acting, because it won't change what she reports to Ryuen. No matter what, I would undeniably be the leader. I simply have to

scan the machine and walk back to the class.

Niharu asked me yesterday if I was going easy on Class C, since I made the other Classes suffer. But that wasn't my intention, I just thought of a way that would lower their points as much as possible. I didn't need to do that with Class C, since their plan is based on the leaders. Even if they get Class B's leader now, they will be stuck with zero points.

I can't see her expression as I pull the card out of my pocket, but my ears pick up on a faint gasp. After scanning the spot, I walk back to my classmates as if nothing happened, completely ignoring Ibuki.

"Hey, Kiyotaka-kun!" Kokoro gets my attention.

"Hey, Kokoro. What is it?"

She walks up next to me and stands on her tiptoes to whisper something into my ear.

"Are you sure it's okay to scan the spot with *her* around?" Kokoro covertly gestures towards Ibuki. She is currently looking a bit fidgety, probably wanting to leave the camp and report to Ryuen as soon as possible. The exam does end tomorrow, after all.

"Don't worry, I've got countermeasures in place in case she tells her class."

"Hm... I can't really imagine how you can have a countermeasure for that, but I'll trust you on this one."

"Thanks. I have one more thing to do before the end of the exam, so I might leave soon."

"Oh, yeah, don't worry. I know you're going out to help the class, it's just that this exam would have been easier if you were around."

She seems to understand the situation more than Haruka and Maya. I say goodbye to her, and exit the grove one last time. But instead of venturing any further, I wait for a few minutes in a cluster of bushes nearby. Soon enough, Ibuki hurriedly left our camp, talking into her radio with a sense of urgency.

"Yes, I'm sure I saw it... No... Understood."

I start to trail her once she was roughly fifteen meters ahead of me. She quickened her pace, probably to meet with Ryuen sooner. If she leads me to him, then I'll be able to sell him Class B's leader.

She eventually stopped walking. The meeting spot wasn't anywhere special, just a part of the forest a few minutes away from the beach.

"So you got Class D's leader?" I overheard Ryuen say. They weren't in my line of sight since I was behind a tree.

"Yeah. I think a girl called him Kiyotaka? I saw him use the card to scan the spot in broad daylight."

"Kuku... he is a clever bastard... is there any way for it to be a trap?"

"No, I'm certain he's the leader. When I went to the spot after, it was recently occupied. Nobody had even gone near the spot today except him."

"I asked if it's a trap, not if he's the leader."

"...Huh?" Ryuuen's statement confuses her.

"If it's the guy I think we're talking about, then we can't be reckless," Ryuuen says. He appears to hold me in a higher regard after I outsmarted him during the trial, and Niharu boasting about my fighting skills.

"But... is there any way for that to be a trap? He's clearly the leader," Ibuki says.

"Kuku, I might just be being too careful. Once again, you're certain it's him?"

"Tch. Of course."

"Hm..." Ryuuen still seems doubtful.

"... I guess I'll write him down as leader. I can't find any loopholes. Unless you're on their side?"

"Really? After all of that, you still don't have any faith in me?"

"Don't worry. I don't think you've betrayed me."

I take this time to step out from my hiding spot. Both of them look suprised to see me standing so close to them.

"Huh? How did you get here?" Ibuki starts. I ignore her and focus on Ryuuen.

"I have a deal I want to make with Class C."

"How long have you been standing there?" He asks. Considering the circumstances, I don't blame him to not have business deals as a priority right now.

"Through the whole thing, but that isn't the point. Do you want to hear about the deal or not?"

"That actually is the point. Don't you care that we found you as the leader?" Ibuki asks.

"Not really."

Ryuuen starts laughing.

"Kukuku... You don't care? Well whatever. I might as well hear this deal. What do you want?"

"I know Class B's leader, and I have evidence."

His smug grin turned into one of surprise.

"Kuku, and you want me to buy it?"

"I'm glad you're quick on the uptake."

"For how much?"

Before returning to the grove, I had created a contract in case Ibuki actually tried to meet Ryuuen in person, and my guess payed off. As an explanation, I give him the paper.

His expression went from suprised to flabbergasted.



"How the fuck did you know about this? Did Katsuragi tell you?"

"That doesn't matter. Just think about if you want to sign it or not." He looks extremely dissatisfied with my words, but he can tell I won't say anything, so he decides to just evaluate the contract.

The contract states that *if Class C receives 10,000 private points from each Class A student in the same week, then 20% of the points will be transferred to Ayanokouji Kiyotaka of Class D. In exchange for the points, Ayanokouji Kiyotaka will give Class C undeniable evidence of the identity of who owns the leader's card for Class B.*

I designed the contract to be hard to exploit or find loopholes in. If the rule was that the Class A had to exchange the points on the same day, then Ryuen could ask for half of the points on one day and the other half on another.

"Kuku..." he said, deep in thought. Since it's easy to know if the deal is worth it or not, he's probably looking for loopholes. It didn't take long for him to reach a decision.

"Well, the deal is beneficial to me, so I will do it." He said, signing the contract with a lead pencil I had found in the hut.

"Hey, what is the deal? And did you follow me all the way here?" Ibuki couldn't stay silent any longer.

"Shut the fuck up, Ibuki."

### **Niharu POV**

"Are you ready?" I ask. After leaving Class B, I met up with Kiyotaka back inside the grove to exchange information. The time is around midnight, and we have one final thing left to do.

"It's not like my life is in danger. I should recover pretty quickly," he assured me.

"Yeah, but there are still a lot of side effects. Holly berries can be nasty."

"Hm, I didn't think I would poison myself to get points for the class, but I'm starting to take this school competition more seriously."

"Haha, I'll follow whatever path you take. So we take the path of crushing some highschoolers?"

His lips slightly curved upwards.

"Yeah, I suppose so. I should do this quickly since digestion takes a few hours."

"..." I didn't reply, stuck in a trance. I didn't think this day would come for many more years.

"What is it?" He asks me, bemused. I rapidly blinked to clear my head.

"Oh, sorry, I just saw something amazing..." I said, and kept staring at his face intently. He probably wouldn't mind.

"Okay? We should start walking to the teachers tent, so we can

immediately go in when the symptoms begin."

"...Yeah."

\*\*\*

The next day, in the early morning, all of the classes lined up to here the results of the exam. Tension was building everywhere.

"Where is Class C? And why do the other Classes look so bad?" Someone in my class asks. Only I know the answer to that.

Class A looks the worst. They have 36 people in the line, so it looks like a few of them couldn't handle the harsh conditions we set for them. The ones still remaining had bedraggled hair, except Katsuragi, and they all seemed on the verge of collapse.

Class B didn't look that bad, but just disheartened. Not all of their classmates got through the exam unscathed, so their bitter moods were understandable.

"Hey, Hasegawa-san, do you know where Ayanokouji-kun is?"

It was Hirata who asked me this. His expression was slightly worried.

"He isn't here right now. But don't worry, nothing went wrong."

He frowned and returned to his seat. I suppose it would be hard to guess what happened with as much information as Hirata has.

Suddenly, Ryuuen strutted out of the foilage and onto the sand next to his teacher. He obviously wanted to get a reaction from everyone, which is not what happened. He glanced around mockingly, challenging anyone who met his gaze.

Ichinose breathed a sigh of relief. After I convinced her to write him down as the leader, she would've been worried after seeing him turn up.

"That guy's from Class C! Why did he get here so late? Where's the rest of them?"

My classmates, sheltered inside the grove, have no idea about what happened with the other classes.

Ryuuen's air of confidence faltered. This wasn't what he was expecting.

"Okay everyone, stop whispering, we will now announce the results of the island exam. We will not be accepting any questions as to how each class got their points."

Mashima-sensei opens an envelope and his eyes widen in shock. This must be the first time he has seen the results.

"Aha... Uhm... in fourth place is..."

Everyone in Class D watched with baited breath.

"Classes B and C, both tying with zero points."

"What?" Neither Ichinose nor Ryuuen could comprehend it.

"Pfft! How could they end with zero points?" Karuizawa ridiculed them, with her voice carrying over to them.

Instead of snapping back at her, Ryuuken looked at the ground in defeat and confusion.

"How..." he didn't seem to know the answer to her question either.

Mashima-sensei didn't wait for them to finish reflecting.

"Next is Class A... with 20 points, and in first place, Class D, with-" Mashima-sensei choked.

"Haha... with 427 points."

---

**Class A and C incorrect guesses (+100)**

**Guessed all class leaders correctly (+150)**

**Buying nets instead of tents (+16)**

**Class B paying for their food (+30)**

**Capturing roughly 9-15 spots twice a day every day (+a lot)**

**Kouenji Kouenji retirement (-30)**

I don't have any news for you guys, except I've finished the first two sections of Fur Elise. I'm not good enough to attempt the next section yet, but I'll try after learning Mozart's Sonata K. 545. It's more of a happy and fast tune.

That's the end of the Island exam, I guess. Thanks for the 1k views on the prologue!

"F" --- TimmyVoszi



# Niharu's Character Description

At first I just wanted to leave her to the readers imagination, but a lot of people want me to say what she looks like.

When I'm writing the scenes, I imagine her to have curly blond hair that falls to her shoulders. I found the perfect photo for it:

I also think of her as short, maybe the same height as kushida? I can't give an exact number.

As Ike had kindly said before, she has good proportions. Other than that, I'll leave things like her eyes to you.

## Volume 4 Chapter 1 - Zodiacs

The night before the exam ended, I was sent to the ship's infirmary to rest for a while. Thanks to the holly berries, I didn't owe any explanations to my classmates. That was now Niharu's job.

Since I only ingested two holly berries, the symptoms were already subsiding. My high resistance to the toxins also help, so I should be discharged early tomorrow.

Somebody burst through the doors of the infirmary and stormed over to the side of my bed.

"Hey, Niharu," I say. She doesn't bother to greet me back.

"You have no idea how much pain I've gone through today. I met up with our friend group to explain while skipping a few details, and it turns out they heard a ridiculously over-exaggerated story from some Class A boys!"

"Hm. Good thing I got poisoned."

"Exactly! Somebody told the class my number, and my phone has been getting spammed for every minute of the day! Did that happen to you?"

"Well, I did get a few messages from our friends, but it hasn't been anything too bad."

She widens her eyes. "Why am I the only one suffering?"

"I don't know, but can we move on? You didn't come here just to complain, did you?" I ask. I'm not going to listen to her cry about getting too many notifications on her phone any more than I have to.

"Oh... I guess I just wanted to see you. I don't have anything I want to talk about in particular," she said, scratching her head awkwardly.

"Hm, I don't really have anything new to say either. How did we capture the cave according to Class A?"

"It wasn't any different from what actually happened, apart from when we woke up. They claimed we, how did Maya say it... did ecchi things? For some reason, everyone was more curious about that than how we got so many points."

"I believe Maya was referring to sexual intercourse."

"Ahh, that explains a lot. But I don't understand why they care so much about it. It's just a natural process, right?"

"There are some things I don't get about normal teenagers either,"

I say. There is a slight pause before she says something else.

"...Doing it stimulates the dopamine receptors in your brain, right? I'm curious as to what it would be like."

"Is that an invitation for me?" I ask. She falters.

"Now I see why Haruka and Maya talked about it in such an indirect way. But yes, I suppose it is."

One of the reasons I came to this school is so I could experience love. But was love right in front of me the whole time? I can't imagine myself trying to mate with a different female. Does love come from having a sexual partner? Experiencing feelings is much more informative than a college psychology course. However, this topic came up too suddenly.

"Did something happen to make you want to do it, or have you been thinking about it for a while?" She frowns at my question.

"I'm not sure. Maybe it's because..." she trailed off. "Whatever. When do you think they will discharge you?" She changes the topic, but I don't mind.

"At earliest, then before dinner, and at latest, tomorrow morning. The medical team were suprised with how quick my recovery was."

"Heh, I bet they were. Everyone's waiting for you to get outta here before making plans, so please hurry. Okay, Bye, Kiyotaka!"

The conversation was short and sudden, and she's leaving the room only minutes after she entered. She just spontaneously does as she pleases.

\*\*\*

"Thanks, doctor."

"No problem. Are you sure you don't want to stay for a few more hours? The other students who ate the berries took twice as long to recover."

"No, I'm fine. I think I just ate less berries than them."

It is now almost 6 PM, and some students, including our group, are making plans to have dinner. The group chat was alive with our friends trying to find a way make the most of the vacation.

*"I saw a fancy Mediterranean restaurant on the third floor, if you want suggestions." (Inogashira Kokoro)*

*"Haha, I was thinking of going to some fast food place!" (Hasabe Haruka)*

*"Do they even have fast food on this ship?" (Satou Maya)*

The cruise ship is one of the largest and most expensive commercial vessels in in Japan. I doubt it would have a burger chain on it.

*"Even if it does, I wanna see what the Mediterranean tastes like." (Hasegawa Niharu)*

*"Eh? You haven't had it? Well, I guess it is kinda expensive." (Satou*

Maya)

*"Then I guess we're going there then. When should I arrive? What should I wear?" (Hasabe Haruka)*

*"Uh, did anyone get an email from the school just now?" (Miyake Akito)*

Miyake and I rarely join the group chat conversations. The email probably has something important in it.

*"It looks like something is happening at 8:40 tonight." (Miyake Akito)*

There was a short lull in the conversation. Everyone's probably looking at the the email.

*"Could it be another exam thingy? And what do you mean 8:20? My email says to meet somewhere at 7:40." (Hasabe Haruka)*

Haruka's message gave me a reason to look at the email too.

*"A special examination will be starting soon. Gather at the designated time in the designated rooms. Students who are more than 10 minutes late for the meeting will receive a penalty. Go to room 201 on the second floor by 18:20 today."*

I have just over 20 minutes to prepare. Everyone's time seems to be different, so this exam probably doesn't involve the whole class working together.

*"Can everyone write down the room number and time in your email? Mine is 201, 18:20" (Ayanokouji Kiyotaka)*

*"Oh, I have the same time as you!" (Hasegawa Niharu)*

*"I have the same as Akito." (Inogashira Kokoro)*

*"Aw, you guys get to go to the same place. Naya, do we have to go alone or are you in my group?" (Hasabe Haruka)*

*"Sorry, I have to go to the room at 7 o'clock. Wait, can we still go to dinner? Kiyotaka and Niharu have to go really soon." (Satou Maya)*

*"Don't worry. If the exam allows us to stay on the ship, then we can make plans for tomorrow." (Ayanokouji Kiyotaka)*

*"What? You mean we might have to go on another island or something?" (Hasabe Haruka)*

*"I don't think so. They wouldn't just throw us on another island straight after a week of being on another." (Hasegawa Niharu)*

She's right. The next exam will probably be on a smaller scale, but it might still interfere with our plans on the cruise. Since I have nothing to do until the exam starts, I headed to the room early. A few Class A students glared at me when I walked past. Suprising, Niharu was already outside the room when I got there.

*"You're here early, Niharu."*

*"I can say the same for you."*

*"I suppose so. Do you know anything about this exam yet?"*

*"Not yet. How-"*

The door opens and Class A's teacher, Mashima-sensei. He didn't



seem surprised to see us here so early.

"Hello, if you two are waiting to enter this room, then you might as well come in now."

From what I've deduced so far, every 20 minutes, a group of students go into the rooms 201 to 204. Since we're allowed to walk in early, then our group must be the first ones to begin the exam.

"Okay," Niharu says and walks into the room, with me trailing behind her. The room comprises of four seats facing the front of the room. Mashima-sensei stands facing the chairs, occasionally sipping from a cup of coffee.

Not being able to speak too freely in front of Mashima-sensei, we just waited in silence until there was a knock on the door near the designated time of arrival.

Hirata peaks his head into the room.

"Hello, is this the right place? Oh, I guess it is if you two are here. Good to see you, Ayanokouji-kun, Hasegawasan." He politely bows his head before sitting down next to me.

"Okay, everybody is here now. I will now explain the rules of the next special exam.

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"Ah, I understand it fully now. Thanks for elaborating, Hasegawasan," Hirata said. He was having trouble wrapping his head around the rules when Mashima-sensei explained them.

"No problem. Is that everything, Mashima-sensei?" She asked.

"Oh, unfortunately, it isn't. In this exam, each group will be divided and labeled by zodiac signs. Your group is the Dragon Group. If you want the full list of the group including students from other classes, I have a sheet here," Mashima-sensei says, before handing Niharu a piece of paper.

We all lean in to look at the sheet. The list contained the names:

Class A- Katsuragi Kouhei, Matoba Shinji, Nishikawa Ryouko, Koharu Yanu.

Class B- Kanzaki Ryuuji, Andou Sayo, Tsube Hitomi.

Class C- Ryuuen Kakeru, Oda Takumi, Suzuki Hidetoshi, Sonoda Masashi.

Class D- Ayanokouji Kiyotaka, Hasegawa Niharu, Hirata Yousuke.

"Haha, this has to be intentional," Niharu says.

"I agree, but isn't it strange that Ichinose isn't in Class B's group?"

Hirata glances at both of us in confusion.

"What do you guys mean?"

Since Class D was unaware of most of the class affairs, they don't know the important names in the other classes.

"Do you want to hear the names of the leaders in each class? And I'm not talking about the card holders on the island," Niharu asks.

"Um, if that has something to do with it..."

"The leader of Class A for the cruise is Katsuragi Kouhei, Class B's second-in-command's name is Kanzaki Ryuuji, and Class C's indisputable leader is Ryuen Kakeru."

"Wow, and they're all in our group? Ao our group is where they stack all of the important players?"

"Not exactly. Class B's real leader isn't here, and other than the leaders, I don't recognize anyone from the other classes."

Hirata pauses for a moment to fully understand everything. Mashima-sensei takes another sip of his coffee and politely sighs.

"...I think I get it now. They've added a few extras, like me, to balance out the other groups."

"Huh? You think you're an extra, Hirata?"

Hirata's contribution to the class was second only to us, or maybe he's done more. We may make the plans to beat the other classes, but he guides and meditates everyone else without exception. He is the glue that holds everyone together. I decide to speak up.

"I think the only exception to that is our class. For the Dragon group, Class D has the three most important people put together."

Hirata looks surprised by my words.

"I appreciate the compliment, but am I really that important? I did nothing to help Sudou, and on the island it was you two who lead us to victory," he said, looking down. For some reason, he doesn't think of himself as a contributor to the class.

Niharu sighs with exasperation.

"Of course you're important! How many fights did you break up while we were gone?"

"Uhh-"

"Sorry you three, but the next group is meant to enter this room in less than a minute. Please continue your talk outside," Mashima-sensei halts our conversation.

Since Niharu and I entered the room early, we didn't meet the people going into the other three rooms next to us. We walked out and found all of them waiting for us.

"Speak of the devil. Here he is now." Everyone flicks their heads towards me.

Nobody said anything, with the other classes glaring at me while I calmly observed them. Suddenly Ryuen starts laughing.

"Kuku... do you care to explain the island results to us, you bastard? It looks like you fucked with the other classes as well."

If That's all they want to talk about, then I have no point in being here. I just continue walking, when a hand rests on my shoulder. I turn to Katsuragi looking at me seriously.

"Just know that the gap between our class and yours is still

significant. If you begin to rise towards our position, we will crush you," he said. Ryuen tries to intimidate me and the other Class C students follow his lead. Class B watches in nervous silence.

Niharu ruins the tense standoff with a giggle.

"We already cut the gap in half during the first exam. Do you think you even stand a chance?"

Not just Katsuragi, but also Ryuen and Kanzaki twitched at her words. They were both obviously not used to losing. However, they couldn't say anything to combat Niharu's question.

Katsuragi let go of my shoulder and we continued walking, with Hirata meekly following us. From a different perspective, Hirata really is just a normal student lumped in with the big fish.

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**The fourth volume has started. I've been brainstorming ideas for the exam, but it's hard with all the limited outcomes, and most of the ideas I thought of have already been used in other fanfics. I want something completely original.**

**Every time I read back through my chapter, I'm not 100% satisfied with how it turns out. I always mess up the pacing or something else but I never know how to fix it, so sorry about that. This is a request for help.**

**K. 545 is very hard.**

## Volume 4 Chapter 2 - Seeds of Doubt 1/2

The following morning, I was eating breakfast with Niharu while waiting for the school to send an email. After we confirm who the targets for our class are, we can start planning ahead.

I considered the possibility that the distribution of Targets could be uneven, for example Class A getting 5 while Class D gets 1, but they wouldn't unbalance the exam so one-sidedly.

"D'you think the Targets will be chosen at random?" Niharu suddenly asks me through a mouthful of pancakes and icecream.

"I get that we're enjoying a holiday on a cruise ship, but I haven't seen you eat anything different." Every morning, without exception, she eats more sugar than I would in a week. Yesterday, she came back to have the same thing for dinner.

"Hehe, just answer the question."

"Hmm..." Her question was a good one, because if there was a pattern or reason for being chosen, then we might be able to abuse that. However, it would be hard to discern a pattern with the amount of Targets we will have. If we want to, then we would need at least half of the Target's names.

"I think we can answer that question later. But what do you think the other classes will do?"

If you can never make the first move against your opponent, then you should try to predict their first move and act against it before it happens. Since I was lacking information, I decided to approach the exam that way.

"Uh, it's kinda obvious. Since they see us as such a huge threat, they're probably gonna team up against us."

I grabbed a napkin and rubbed chocolate sauce off her nose for the second time. I'm starting to think she's doing it on purpose.

"I thought the same. If that happens, then this exam will probably be the toughest challenge yet."

"Mhmm."

"It's on your nose again."

"Whoops! Anyway, the email should be coming any second now... here it is!" Our phones buzzed at the same time. Everyone else in the cafe also checked their pockets.

*"After a period of thorough consideration, you have not been chosen as the 'target'. Please act together as one and challenge the exam in that*

*manner. The exam itself shall begin from 1:00 PM today onwards. The exam will be held for three days from this point onwards. If you belong to the (Dragon) group please come up to the room marked as such on the second floor immediately."*

The way the email is worded suggests that there is some sort of formula used to choose the Targets. However, it doesn't narrow it down from being based on a pattern or the students abilities.

"Well, I guess that's one question answered."

"I suppose so, even if it doesn't help us much. Are you the target?"

"Nope."

"Hm, that's fine. We should get going now," I said, trying to nudge her into getting up.

"Huh? But I haven't finished yet!" She gestures to her plate with a mountain of pancakes and toppings on it. It would take her at least half an hour to get through it.

"We will get a penalty if we arrive late. Cmon."

"Mph-"

She looks back at her pancakes longingly as I drag her out of the cafe. The dragon group's meeting room for the entire exam is room 205. When we got there, Hirata, Kanzaki and the other two from Class B were already inside.

The room had 14 chairs lined in a circle, all facing towards the middle. Kanzaki was positioned closest to the door.

"Hey, Kanzaki," I tried to greet him, but he ignored me.

"...What is it?"

He didn't reply.

"Did I do something wrong?"

He sighed and finally acknowledges my presence.

"Yes. Class B made a mistake by trying to trust you."

"Wait, what do you mean?" Niharu interjects.

"Don't even try to pretend you're innocent. On the island, several of our classmates suddenly fell ill, and our guesses of the other leaders were incorrect. We based our guesses on what you told us."

"Wait! You're getting this all wrong. We guessed the same leaders as you. The problem is that someone found out who your leader is."

Kanzaki's expression didn't change.

"Class C sold it to us. They said it was Shiranami Chihiro."

Niharu made an extremely bold lie, but without evidence, Kanzaki would never be able to find out the truth. It also had a massive impact.

"Why should we believe that?" Kanzaki asked with a conflicted expression. The lie made a lot of sense if you didn't know any details.

"To get to the higher classes, Ryuuken wants to sabotage you as

much as possible, and he won't lose anything if the lowest class takes points from you." Now, Niharu is also approaching it with circumstances and logic. Sayo, one of the Class B members spoke up.

"...I suppose that makes sense... Ryuuji-kun, are you sure they betrayed us?"

Kanzaki's frown deepened. He had a fifty-fifty chance of choosing the truth, with no way of confirmation. At that moment, the people Niharu accused walked in.

Ryuuen nonchalantly plopped himself on the chair that is furthest away from everyone else.

"Say, Ryuuen..." Niharu started.

Ryuuen barely looked up.

"What is it, babe?"

"Did you make a deal with our class involving Class B's leader?"

Now I understand what Niharu is trying to do. She's going to try to reverse the roles in the story, making it seem like Ryuuen came to us with the leader of Class B, when it's the other way around. I admire her bravery but it could lead to extreme consequences.

"What's this about, babe?"

He seems to be trying to goad her.

"I just want to clarify something. Did you make a deal with us about their leader or not?"

Ryuuen's eyes narrowed, with him trying to find any possible trap in her words.

"..."

He decided not to answer, which was the smartest move to make. Niharu hadn't given him many options to work with. However, even though he played it safe, his silence would cause Class B's suspicion to grow.

Finally, Class A's representatives entered the room. Niharu was satisfied with the outcome of her questioning, and backed down.

"Forget it. Let's get on with the meeting."

"Hmm... how about we all introduce ourselves?" Sayo suggests, causing Ryuuen to snort.

"Baldy, Bastard, Babe. Everyone else is irrelevant to me. Let's just get this shit exam over with."

"Oh..." Sayo squeaked. She obviously wasn't expecting such a vicious reply.

"If that's what you want, then allow me to explain Class A's stance for this exam," Katsuragi announced loudly, standing up from his chair. Once everyone was looking at him, he spoke.

"Class A will not participate in any negotiations or discussions to find the Target. We will be aiming for outcome 2."

I am once again being reminded of Katsuragi's defense nature. His strategy is to cut off the flow of information between the classes. In the idea scenario for him, where every group reaches outcome 2, then there won't be a change in class points, which benefits his class since they are standing at the top of the class hierarchy.

"What do you mean? I thought students have to participate," Kanzaki says.

"It is compulsory to go to the meetings, but not to contribute to them. I won't hear any more arguments," Katsuragi puts his foot down. It's easier for us if they choose to do this, since it's less likely for them to team up with the other classes against us.

"Kuku, as boring as ever."

Ryuuen doesn't get a reply.

"Can I speak now?" Niharu already has another plan. She can take the frontlines of this exam, and I might try to do some manipulation behind the scenes. When nobody else spoke up, Niharu continued.

"I just want to say that the Target is in our class." That was a lie. Hirata had texted us and said it wasn't him either, so her approach is very interesting.

As promised, Katsuragi looked intrigued, but he just crossed his arms and didn't say anything.

"Huh? If it's true, why would you tell us that?" Tsube Hitomi, the last Class B representative, spoke for the first time.

"Sorry, but I can't say why. However, I can say that we want the first outcome." One lie after another.

"How about you tell us who it is, then? Nobody will betray you," Ryuuen said with a smirk.

"Haha."

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The first session was uneventful after the first few minutes. Class A refused Hirata's attempts to start a discussion, and nobody else had anything to say either. I was currently sitting in my room, which I shared with Hirata, Kouenji and Yukimura.

"Everyone, is it okay if Niharu visits this room? We will be discussing the exam," I said. Kouenji stopped doing one-handed pushups to address me.

"I suppose I can allow you to bring in your twin demon," he said elegantly, wiping his face with a hand towel. Yukimura glances at him strangely.

"I don't mind either, but Kouenji, why do you always call those two demons?"

"I believe the answer is quite obvious. I call them demons simply because they are demons."

"Huh?"

"Hirata, what do you think?" I ask before Yukimura presses for more answers. I doubt Kouenji would tell him anything, but it's just irritating to listen to.

"Oh, I'm completely fine with it. In fact, is it okay if I join you? Since we're in the same group."

Our talk might involve some of our less innocent plans, but having Hirata aware of everything happening would be convenient.

"Sure. She just said she's a few minutes away."

"...Yeah. and what was she thinking when she said one of us was the Target? Not that I'm saying it was a bad idea, but I'm curious about her plan."

"I think it's better to wait until she gets here. Also, do you know any other Targets from our class?"

"Erm, I do know one..."

"Who is it? I need to know since there might be a pattern in how the Targets are selected." Hirata shuffles on his feet uncomfortably.

"Well, I guess I can tell you if it will help us win... Karuizawa-san is the Target of the Rabbit Group."

"WHAT?" Yukimura roared. "SHE LIED TO US?"

Hirata flinched. I don't think he was aware Yukimura is in the same group as her. Luckily, there was a knock on the door, signaling Niharu's arrival. Yukimura stops yelling, and just grits his teeth.

Before Hirata can open the door for her, she swings it open without waiting for an answer.

"Oh, hey, Hirata."

"Come on in, Hasegawa-san."

"I know."

She skips into the room and jumps on my bed.

"So, Kiyotaka-"

"I already know what you did. But Hirata doesn't, so please explain it to him."

"Oh? Sure," she patted the bed, inviting Hirata onto it too. He and Yukimura just froze.

"Uhh..."

"It's easier if you just sit down. It's kinda a long story." After she starts patting the bed more insistently, Hirata gingerly sits down next to her.

"So, when I claimed that the Target is one of us, I was aiming to do two things. The first one is to watch how everyone reacts."

Yukimura began to listen into the explanation with intrigue on his face.

"Based on everyone's responses, we know the real Target is somebody in Class B."



"Wait, how did you get that out of it?" Hirata is suprised, but he doesn't seem to doubt her statement. He must trust our abilities a lot now.

"When I said it was one of us, one of the Class B students, who also happened to talk the least before that point, asked why I would reveal that. Also, their reactions were noticeably different from the other classes." She waited for him to process this information.

"Of course, none of them expected it, but Class B also had a hint of confusion. It sounds like a stretch, but I'm confident I'm right."

Yukimura speaks up with a frown. Everyone in the room is paying attention to the conversation, and only he seems to doubt her.

"I wasn't there myself, but that doesn't sound like enough evidence at all. Don't make a brash decision based on guesswork like that."

Kouenji let out a booming laugh. "If the she-demon is confident, then it must be true."

"What is it with-"

"Can I continue?" Niharu is already tired of hearing Yukimura speak. I don't blame her.

"...Thanks. The other thing I gained from it was to set up our next plan. If you wanted to be absolutely certain if someone is the Target or not, what would you do?" She pulled my pillow out from under my head and started playing with it.

"...I would want to see their version of the email that the school sent to us this morning."

"Hey."

"Exactly. Now, this is what I want you to do."

"Niharu?"

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**I have another new idea for this exam, but it probably isn't as good as the island exam.**

**"Just let them fuck already," said NickYanJie in a demanding tone.**

**"Okay, okay," Author-san caved in.**



## Volume 4 Chapter 3 - Seeds of Doubt 2/2

On the same day, in the second session of the exam, Niharu wanted to commence the next phase of her plan. Immediately after everyone sat down, she begins.

"Hey, Tsube, can I ask you a question?"

Tsube's eyes widen in surprise. She wasn't expecting being called out, and neither did anyone else. She is seen as one of the less influential people of the group. Or irrelevant, as Ryuuken would say.

"Uhh, okay?"

"Good. Are you the Target?"

"Ehh?" Nobody expected that either.

"Kuku, didn't you say the Target was in your class, babe?" Ryuuken points out what the others are thinking. Class A hasn't yet changed their stance of complete silence.

"Yes, I did."

Now everyone was perplexed even further. However, instead of elaborating, she turned towards Tsube and looked at her expectantly, pressuring her for an answer.

"Erm, well, no. I'm not the target," Tsube said despite questioning her motives.

"Okay, thanks. Now Kanzaki, are you the Target?"

"Why are you asking this? If-"

"Refusing to answer might draw unnecessary suspicion to yourself. Just answer the question and be done with it."

"Hmm, alright. I am not the Target, either."

"Good."

If she asked Sayo next, then she could hide the fact that she knew it was Kanzaki. If she stopped asking, then it would make Class B panic as well as draw suspicion to him. She chose the second option.

"..."

She stopped paying attention to everyone in the room, who were waiting for her to continue. As the seconds ticked by, Class B's nervousness increased.

"Uhh, are you going to ask anyone else?" Sayo asked.

"Nope," Niharu said. Then, like the evil being she is, she suddenly pulls out her phone and starts typing. Based on what had transpired seconds before, Class B had every reason to believe she is emailing

Kanzaki's name to the school.

"Woah, Hasegawa-san!" Sayo exclaimed.

"Hmm?" Niharu pretends not to understand. Sayo realizes her blunder and grows pale.

"Uhh, nothing..."

"It didn't sound like nothing," Niharu says while tilting her head. At this point, we had gotten what we wanted, and she was just toying with them for fun. Hirata understands this too, and is watching with a mix of awe and fear.

"No... don't worry about it..."

"Hm, if you say so."

Sayo let out a hidden sigh of relief.

"Did you think I would betray the group?" The moment they believe they are safe, she immediately goes back on the offensive. They all stiffened again, unable to move or speak.

"Haha, Of course I can't betray the group, because the Target is in my class."

The other classes, who thought they were beginning to understand the situation, relapsed back into confusion. The reactions of Class B and Niharu's statements all contradict each other. Class B also looked couldn't comprehend what she is doing.

"What was the point in all that? Stop spouting shit." Ryuuken is sick of her little games.

"What do you mean, Ryuuken?"

"Not a single thing you say makes sense. I'm honestly thinking of smacking you right now." He didn't mince his words, and it didn't seem like an exaggeration either. Including his classmates, everyone visibly showed disapproval for his words.

"Hehe, you don't need to do that. But if you think it's nonsense, then maybe I can show you proof."

"Huh? You have proof that it's one of you?" Kanzaki asked. The question didn't arouse suspicion since everyone was thinking the same thing, although it was for different reasons.

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"I'm starting to see why Kouenji calls her a demon," Hirata whispers to me as we leave the room.

"Yeah. Even I'm surprised she kept it up for so long. It took about half of the session before they all gave up."

"What are you guys talking about?"

"Uh, just how impressive you were in that meeting."

Afterwards, Niharu, Hirata and I left to go to a restaurant to discuss the session. When we got there, however, we found a few of our classmates.

"Pretend not to see them," Niharu muttered to me through the corner of her mouth. One glare at Hirata silenced him too.

We tried to discreetly walk past their table to reach the corner of the room, but Hirata couldn't conceal his presence well enough. Just before we reached our destination, a cheerful voice called out from behind us.

"Hey, you three! Are you here to talk about the exam as well? You should join us!" It was Kushida, of course. An unpleasant-looking Horikita sat next to her.

"Oh, you guys are here too? We walked right past you!" Niharu hides her dissatisfaction.

"Aha, That's fine. And, there are enough seats for all of us!" Kushida's bright smile somehow brightened.

"Great! Let's sit down, then," Niharu's mask was even more convincing than Kushida's. We can't talk about our plans in front of her, but it's hard to decline her offer.

Once we sat down, Kushida immediately started the conversation.

"Hasegawa-san, Ayanokouji-kun, remember that one time when I asked you to help me become friends with Horikita-san?"

She's referring to a small request she gave us months ago.

"You did what?" Horikita doesn't seem to appreciate Kushida's attempts at befriending her.

"Of course, they denied me... but I won't give up!"

"I thought you called me here to discuss the exam. If that's the real reason, then there is no point in me staying any longer."

She went to leave, but Kushida clasps her hand.

"Please stay, Horikita-san! We will talk about the exam! I just want to be your friend as well!" Kushida brought out her best puppy eyes. Horikita sighed in annoyance.

"Alright, just let go of my hand."

"Great! Thank you, Horikita-san!"

It was like watching two opposite substances opposing each other, and yet Kushida was going out of her way to befriend her. I don't understand her motives for doing this, but it could be the same reason she befriended everyone else. However, her attempts to get close are more persistent than what can be considered normal.

"Uh, so what were you guys talking about before we arrived?" Hirata asked, trying to move the conversation in a more active direction.

"Oh, we just got here too, and I wasn't thinking of anything specific about the exams. How about we all say what groups we're in?"

"I'm in the Rabbit Group," Horikita is in the same group as

Yukimura and Karuizawa.

"Oooh, okay. What about you three?"

"Actually, we're all in the Dragon Group together," Niharu said.

"Ehh? You are all in the same group? That's, like, really lucky, isn't it? That means the Dragon Group is pretty much in the bag!" She enthusiastically says, and does a small fist pump. It's possible that she does it to receive more attention, but I don't think it would be that simple.

"Actually, it isn't a coincidence. They put most of the leaders in the dragon Group," I said. Her eyes widen.

"Woah, I never knew that! So is it actually really tough?" At her words, Hirata smiled.

"Actually, Hasegawa-san has single-handedly controlled both of the meetings so far."

"Doesn't that just mean the other leaders are incompetent? We all saw the results of the island and it doesn't at all seem like they were organized," Horikita can't imagine Niharu dominating an entire room of other qualified people, and her other statement made sense.

"Oh, I would say two of them are some of the most competent in the country, believe me," Niharu says, but her words don't mean much to Horikita since she could just be praising herself.

"Hm, if you say so."

"I think That's really impressive! And Horikita, What's been happening in your group?" Kushida asks.

"Nothing much has happened. But Karuizawa is constantly getting into petty squabbles with some Class C girls and everyone is tired of it," She sighs.

"At least she isn't acting so loud and obnoxiously anymore."

Hirata perked up at her words.

"She's been fighting with some other girls? Can you tell us any details?"

"Unfortunately, I cannot. I don't pay attention to things that trivial."

Hirata, being in a relationship with Karuizawa, is naturally worried for his partner. Normally I found their interactions as a couple different to what I read in books, but I'm not experienced enough with the outside world to make a judgment on what is normal and what isn't. If he wasn't worried for her here, though, I would definitely be suspicious.

"Are you sure you don't remember any details?" He pressed her for answers, and Horikita was clearly getting irritated.

"Hirata, don't worry. Wouldn't she tell you the details herself if she was in trouble?" My question calmed him down a bit.

"Yes, I guess you're right. How are things going in your group, Kushida?"

"Ah, I'm in the Monkey Group with Onodera-san and Kouenji-kun. Things aren't going a hundred percent smoothly, but we should be fine."

I can imagine things would be a bit more difficult with the strong-minded Kouenji. I'm guessing he would be refusing to cooperate with the rest of the group.

"I mean, I don't mean this in a bad way, but Kouenji doesn't seem to try to socialize that much," Kushida confirmed my suspicions in the least offensive way possible.

Suddenly, our phones buzzed.

*"The Monkey Group's test has ended.*

*Students from the Monkey Group are no longer required to participate. Please be careful not to disturb the other students".*

"Wait, didn't you just say you're in the Monkey Group, Kushida-san?"

"I did! Someone must have tried to betray the group!" She gasped.

"Do you know who might've done it?"

"Well, we didn't progress much to find the Target, but I remember Kouenji said the exam was a waste of his time..."

"Do you think he guessed randomly so he didn't have to go to sessions?" Horikita asked with frustration in her voice. She took the importance of class points more seriously than anyone, and hearing someone throwing it away on a whim would be infuriating.

"I don't want to accuse him if anything, but..." she trailed off. I found the idea of Kouenji doing something like that very easy to imagine, considering he lost us 30 points so he could return to the ship during the island exam.

Horikita started seethingly muttering things inaudible to everyone else, no doubt about Kouenji.

"Oh no, I kind of have to go. Everyone is asking for my help," Kushida sheepishly said and hurriedly left the restaurant.

"I'm getting a lot of messages too... I'll stay for now, though. What did you guys really want to talk about here?" Hirata decided to prioritize our schemes more than our classmates's piece of mind.

"Uhh, Horikita, is it okay if the three of us discuss things privately?" Niharu asked.

"I was planning on leaving anyway," Horikita said before leaving promptly. Hirata suddenly gasps.

"I'm sorry, but Karuizawa-san messaged me as well. Can we talk about this tomorrow?"

"Uh, we kind of have to talk now. But go help her anyway, the plan doesn't involve you doing anything."

"Thanks for understanding."

Once he was gone, I asked Niharu something.

"Is he the real reason you chose this place?" I indicated to another table, where three people were debating about something in agitation.

"Yeah. When Kanzaki leaves the restaurant, can you follow him? Just in case we need to know his room number."

"Sure. Is this how you're planning to obtain evidence that one of us is the Target?"

"Yeah. The only foolproof evidence would be the email, which we can't forge."

"So in other words, we get it without forging it? I'm not sure if the plan you're thinking of could work."

If she wants to swap the SIM cards, then the school might not allow it. The phones given to us by the school are strictly designed to restrict our communication from the outside world, so it might not even be possible.

"That's why I'm going to ask Chabashira-sensei tonight. If she confirms it, then I'll give you the go ahead to take it."

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I silently trailed Kanzaki from roughly 20 meters behind. I could get closer, but with the ship's small and empty corridors, it's much more challenging to not be noticed.

He stopped on the fifth floor, and walked to his room in a nervous state. Niharu's mind games and the debate in the restaurant have started to make an impact, and he doesn't know if he somehow messed up and blew his cover or not.

With trembling fingers, he opened the door of room 522.

---

A few of you told me I didn't have to 'make them fuck' if I didn't want to, but it's fine. I was originally planning on it when I first made the story anyway.

After quickly rereading and editing the entire story, I've realized my writing has improved since when I started three weeks ago.

"UUUOOOOHHH! SSSSEEEGGGGGSSSSS!" -  
BlackFlameEmpress





## Volume 4 Chapter 4 - Deception

*"Chabashira-sensei confirmed it would work if we tried. Are you ready? XO" (Hasegawa Niharu)*

*"I'm waiting outside his room now. What does XO mean?" (Ayanokouji Kiyotaka)*

*"I don't know. Some girls in class told me to say that when texting you." (Hasegawa Niharu)*

*"Okay. It's past midnight, so I'll go now. Wish me luck." (Ayanokouji Kiyotaka)*

*"Sure. XO" (Hasegawa Niharu)*

Niharu confirmed that it is possible to swap SIM cards between different phones. Now all I need to do is acquire Kanzaki's, and phase two would be complete.

I silently opened the door with the number 522 bolted on the front, and the light from the hallway combated against the pitch black room. I slipped through the doorframe and quickly but stealthily closed the door behind me.

Kanzaki's bed was furthest from the door, situated in the back left corner of the room. There was a faint ray of moonlight shining through a window and onto his bedside table, illuminating a bottle of water, and more importantly, his phone.

I altered my breathing pattern in line with Kanzaki's to reduce the likeliness of him waking up, and slid his phone into my pocket. I glance around, and nobody is showing any sign of stirring and waking up.

I then pull out my own phone to send a text.

*"I have the phone. Start erasing all of your contacts and messages except for the Target email." (Ayanokouji Kiyotaka)*

*"I'm not dumb. XO" (Hasegawa Niharu)*

*"Of course. Do you want to meet on the front deck?" (Ayanokouji Kiyotaka)*

*"Sounds good. XO" (Hasegawa Niharu)*

\*\*\*

"This is Kanzaki's," I say, handing the phone over to her.

"Haha, I can see that," she giggled. Her hair was waving in the wind as we stood on the bow of the ship, overlooking the ocean. I'm starting to see why people get sentimental over views and settings they experience.

She takes the phone from my hand, and puts it in her pocket, before stopping and doing nothing else. We just stood there, watching each other in silence.

### **Niharu POV**

We didn't move nor speak, but simply gazed into each others eyes. His golden pupils seemed to glow in the dark, observing me. His face didn't show any hint of emotion, but that made me feel comfortable after seeing it unchanging for so many years. I blink a few times to snap out of my trance.

"Hm, I think I'll get going now," I say, breaking the silence. I wanted to stay like that for longer, but we needed to finish doing this before dawn arrives and we don't have much time left.

"Okay. I'll wait here for when the SIM cards are swapped. Just return to this spot once you've done it."

"Okay. See you later, Kiyotaka."

"Don't say goodbye when you'll see me again in 20 minutes."

"Hehe, sorry."

I don't recognize the emotions I'm feeling right now, but I think I like them.

### **Kiyotaka POV**

Eventually, Niharu returned and handed me back Kanzaki's phone, with her SIM card placed inside it. It was now my job to place Kanzaki's phone back exactly where it was before.

In the morning, he will immediately notice that something is wrong, but there isn't anything he can do to stop us. During the next exam session, he might speak out, but the other classes will believe the email more than the claims of a student.

As I walked towards the elevator, I heard footsteps coming from behind me. If I am caught doing something in the middle of the night, then we might lose credibility, so I quickly hid behind a large plant as the person approaches closer. Is that... Kushida?

Her expression is unlike anything I've seen on her face before. Her eyes were bloodshot from crying, and she had a permanent scowl on her face. She wasn't paying too much attention to her surroundings, so I easily hid my presence from her.

I let her take the elevator and waited for a few minutes. What I saw intrigued me, but now isn't the time to get sidetracked. When I became certain it was safe, I took the stairs up to Kanzaki's floor and repeated the same process I had done a few hours ago. I'm certain nobody saw me.

\*\*\*

When I got back to my room, I found Hirata leaning on the wall next to the entrance. His eyes fluttered open when I approached him.

"Ayanokouji-kun."

He has dark circles under his eyes; he must have been waiting a long time just for me to come back.

"Is there a reason you stayed up so late?" I asked him.

"I can ask you the same question. Did you accomplish whatever you were trying to do?"

"Yeah, I didn't make any mistakes. You can see the results early tomorrow."

"Heh, I'm looking forward to it. Shall we go inside?" He asked, gesturing to the door of our room.

"Didn't you have something to say to me?" He wouldn't have waited outside the room all night just for that.

"Oh, not really. I just couldn't sleep," he said while rubbing his eyes.

"Is there any particular reason for that?"

"Uhm..." he contemplates whether he should say anything or not.

"...I guess I'm just slightly worried."

"Why?"

"Well... Karuizawa seems to be having trouble with some girls in her group. More than Horikita let on," he confesses.

"I'm only telling you this because I trust you, Ayanokouji-kun. Please don't tell anyone else about this."

"Don't worry, the secret is safe with me. Let's get some sleep."

He nods and we both enter our beds without waking Yukimura. Kouenji makes a knowing smile but doesn't say anything.

Now, there is one more thing for me to address. Horikita said something that caught my attention, and now Hirata increased my interest even more.

\*\*\*

The next morning, just before the scheduled time for the exam session, I found Kanzaki had already arrived, and was currently pacing the room with a foreboding look on his face.

When he sees me, his face darkens even more.

"You... Did you do it? Or was it Hasegawa?" He asks. It didn't take him long to find out his emails and messages had been meddled with.

"Hm?"

He sighs. "I know it was you guys who did it. This time I am certain my suspicions are correct."

He pulls out his phone and holds it toward me unquestioningly, as if waiting for an explanation. When I saw he wasn't recording the conversation, I decided to stop feigning ignorance. We are the only ones in the room, so there won't be any consequences if I'm honest.

"You're right. We are the ones who tampered with your phone."

But there is nothing you can do about it," I say calmly. He blinked repeatedly, not expecting me to admit it so easily.

"Aren't you worried I'll report you for this?"

"There is nothing to report. We didn't do anything against the rules."

"But-" Kanzaki is interrupted by the door opening again, and Niharu struts into the room boastfully.

"I can see you told this guy what's up," she said, looking at Kanzaki condescendingly.

"Huh? Why-"

"Shh. Stop talking. What we do today will benefit you just as much as us. So during and after the meeting, try not to oppose us as much as possible."

Kanzaki went to say something, then closed his mouth in confusion. We watch as his confusion slowly transforms into suspicion and disbelief.

"Are you saying that whatever you did with my phone will help me? I'm sorry, but I can't believe that." To be fair, even if he wasn't cautious and untrusting by nature, he would still have doubts about her statement.

"Then you don't have to. It won't make a difference," Niharu said dismissively. "Just know after the results are out that you can trust our class."

He frowned and doesn't say anything else. Niharu presented him the possibility to confirm if she is trustworthy by using the exam results. Niharu turns to me with a sudden change in attitude.

"Okay, let's do this, Kiyotaka!"

"Actually, there is something I need to do after the meeting. Do the rest without me."

"Oh? That sounds important," she said with her eyebrows raised.

"It is. Sorry if it makes anything difficult."

"Hah, don't worry. It will be easy either way."

\*\*\*

Slowly, the room filled up, and Ryuen came in just as the cruise's speakers announced the start of the session. Everyone eyed Niharu with caution or fear, which isn't suprising considering what happened in yesterday's second meeting.

She opened her mouth to yawn, and a few people tensed up. Upon seeing their reactions, she just smirked with satisfaction.

"Uhh..." One of the Class C students tried to begin, but a glare from his master shut him down.

Kanzaki didn't know how to act, so he just decided to stay silent, making Sayo and Tsube follow suit.

With Class A refusing to speak by principle and us not

contributing, the entire Dragon Group was at a stand still. Nobody attempted to start a conversation, and eventually the room was full of people of people scrolling on their phones.

### **Niharu POV**

When the session ended, I walked over to Ryuuken's chair. In the corner of my eye, I see Kiyotaka leaving the room. I'm curious as to what he might be doing.

"What is it, babe?" Ryuuken asks, and I turn my attention back to him.

"I have a deal to make with you. Can we speak about this in private?"

"Hm, the last time I did this, I ended up being humiliated and your class crushed everyone else. So get out of my way." He stood up and brushed past my shoulder as he left.

"Wait! Just hear out the deal before you deny it. I can guarantee that it will interest you."

He sighs. "Fine. I'll listen to the deal if it shuts your mouth." It's an obvious lie used to cover up the fact that he's curious about what the deal might be. He wasn't trying to hide it much.

Kanzaki shows obvious nervousness at our interaction, but there is nothing he can do now. I'm not planning on betraying him anyway. When we waited for everyone else to leave, he understandably hesitated to follow his classmates.

"Kanzaki, we are having a meeting now. Do you have any reason to stay?"

He had a conflicted expression as he sought for an answer. Eventually he just slumped his shoulders and turned around.

"...No. I won't interrupt your business." Surprisingly, he didn't decide to stay or question what the deal would be about. He even shut the door after he left.

"Okay. I'll get straight to it, then."

"Go on."

"When I said the Target is in my class, I wasn't lying."

"Pfft, that's bullshit. Unless you show me some kind of evidence, this deal is already off. I don't believe you for a second."

"That's the thing. If I tell you who the Target is with evidence, then you can betray the group and give us 600,000 private points."

He stopped talking to ponder the deal for a few seconds.

"So you want to trade 50 class points for 100,000 private points? The deal is strangely in my favor," he implies that there must be some kind of catch.

"If you think that I'm skipping any details, then you're wrong. This cruise has given us enough class points already, and I care about private points more."

"Hm... over time, keeping the class points will pay out more. What you said isn't good enough."

"Seriously? I thought you could already tell, but I'll say it outright. I care more about the short term than the long term. The money I get from keeping the class points means nothing unless I save up for the majority of my time spent here, which I definitely won't do."

I'm trying to convince him that I benefit from the deal from my own perspective. The more I get out of it, the less likely it is to be a trap.

"Kukuku, to be honest, I think the same. Assuming I accept the deal, what evidence will you show me?"

"I will get them to show you the email that was sent by the school that tells you whether you are the target or not," I say. And as an afterthought, I add, "remember, you can't forge or falsify the email in any way."

If he accepts the deal, then I get 600,000 private points, the gap between Class C and D shortens even more, and we possibly regain Class B's trust. The benefits from our plan outweigh the benefits of simply betraying the group.

"...I see. There aren't any loopholes as far as I can see. Are you too scared to do this without a contract?"

"Yes. You have to sign here."

---

As you might have noticed, I put a bit of effort in and changed the storg cover. Well, all I did was type the name of the story in cursive and slapped it on the fanart. I noticed a lot of COTE fanfics had the same cover as I did, so I decided to make it slightly more unique.

In the first paragraphs, I tried being more descriptive with Kiyos surroundings, and added a small scene to begin the romance between them.

"Minuet In G" is really fun and easy. Would recommend to beginner pianists.

## Volume 4 Chapter 5 - Bad News

Niharu POV

*"The Dragon Group's test has ended.*

*Students from the Dragon Group are no longer required to participate. Please be careful not to disturb the other students".*

A few hours after the exam meeting ended, I was waiting for Kiyotaka back in his room, looking over the Target names we know to try and find a pattern. Kiyotaka is doing something that I suspect is pretty important, so I might as well contribute to the class while he is gone.

Kiyotaka's roommates have gotten used to me entering the room unannounced, and currently only Yukimura is present.

"Hey, isn't that your group, Hasegawa?"

"Yeah. A lot of things happened but I don't think they found the Target."

"Hmm." He didn't seem to know what to say next. "...Uh, what's that sheet in your hand?"

"Oh, this?" I ask, holding up the list of groups and their participants. "This might be the key to winning the exam."

He looks at the paper inquisitively.

"That thing is? What do you mean?"

"Well, long story short, there might be a pattern in how the Targets are chosen for each group. I have this sheet to see if it can be found through the names."

"Oh... I actually didn't think of that as a possibility," he says, scratching his head. He took pride in his intelligence, so he probably wouldn't be happy with this apparent flaw in his thinking.

"Don't worry, I don't think any of the other classes have either. I've only been looking at it for a minute, though. I haven't had any time to check it properly."

Suddenly, Haruka bursts into the room, with the door slamming against the wall as she enters.

"Oh, I didn't mean to slam it *that* loud," she said with embarrassment. For a moment I thought she was worked up, but that doesn't seem to be the case.

"Hey! What makes you think you can just barge in here?" Yukimura says angrily.

"Uh, I know it was rude, but isn't that exactly what Haru does?"



"Haru? You mean Hasegawa? That's different. What are you doing in here?"

"Pfft. It's different?" She snorts in derision. "Well, whatever. I'm here because you haven't been answering your phone, and a few of our classmates said you would be here," she addresses me.

"Ah, sorry about that. I was having a bit of trouble with my sim card," I technically stated the truth. "It should be fixed in a couple days, though. Don't worry."

"Hmm, if it is something like that, then I can't really blame you. But why do you hang out here so much? I only see you in our room when we have to sleep."

I honestly don't know the answer to that question, so I just tell her something else she would want to hear.

"Uh, I don't know. I have a lot of free time now that my group has finished the exam, so, if you want, I can hang out with you guys more often."

"Great! We are actually planning on going to the pool on the top floor in half an hour, if you wanna come."

"Okay, I'll be there."

I was planning on looking for a pattern until Kiyotaka returned, but winning the exam wasn't something we need urgently. And, Haruka would probably get mad if I don't hang out with her and the others for the rest of our holiday.

\*\*\*

"Hey, guys! Sorry I'm late!" Suprisingly, Haruka was the last one to arrive at the gathering.

"You didn't manage to find Kiyotaka?" Maya asks. It looks like she tried to find him just before we were meant to meet at the pool.

Haruka frowns. "He just magically disappeared! Literally nobody has seen him for hours, and he wasn't with Haru in his room."

"Huh? Niharu, do you know where he went?" Maya questions me. He didn't tell me what grand schemes he was coming up with, so I have no idea.

"Uh, no, he didn't." The others seem surprised by my reply.

"So even Niharu doesn't know..." Kokoro murmurs. "Do you think... something happened to him?" I thought she was joking, but her face, along with everyone elses, shifted into worry.

"Woah, that's a pretty big leap. What makes you think that?"

"Before I answer, did he say he was going somewhere? Or did he disappear without a trace?" She asks as she pulls closer to me.

"He said he would be gone for a few hours." Everyone, who at this point were all tensed, slumped their shoulders and sighed in relief.

"Hah, I'm suprised he didn't tell you why though..."

"Does that mean-" Haruka paused as another group approached ours. It was Hirata with a few girls following in his wake. Karuizawa trailed behind the rest of them, and Hirata had a slightly worried expression. It looks like the situation between her and those girls in her group hasn't improved.

"Hey, Hirata," I greet him first.

"Uh, hi." I can only find small traces of his usual upbeat mood, and I'm not the only person to notice something is wrong. Well, it isn't very subtle.

"Hirata-kun? Is something bothering you?" Kokoro asks him. She became friends with him at the very start of the year, so she probably knows him more than anyone in our group.

"Something is wrong, but he doesn't want to tell us!" Mori says with a pout. Karuizawa begins to show visible discomfort at her words.

With everyone focused on Hirata, nobody else seems to notice Karuizawa's similarly sombre mood. With a quick judgment of her character, you can easily see that she is very headstrong and even haughty, so the situation between her and the other girls must have escalated pretty badly for her to be in such a state.

"Erm, sorry guys... I just don't think I have the right to say anything."

"Huh? You don't have the right?" The other girls don't know when to back down.

"Erm, yeah."

"Why not? Is it someone else's problem?"

"Sorry, but I can't say any more." If he confirmed her question and someone finally noticed Karuizawa's mood, it wouldn't take long for them to start pressuring her for answers too.

"Aw, well if you won't say anything, then how about we just try to cheer you up?" The conversation finally goes in Hirata's favor.

"You don't have to put in too much effort for me, but it would be nice if you stopped with the questions."

"Hmm, okay. How about we go to that sandwich bar next to the pool? It might brighten your spirit a bit."

"Oh! Everyone was talking about it! Is it okay if we go with you?" Haruka asks while nearly jumping with excitement.

\*\*\*

After a few long hours of socializing, I could finally return to Kiyotaka's room in the early evening. When I arrived, I found him contemplating something while sitting upright on his bed. Whatever he's thinking about probably has something to do with the plans he carried out today.

"You're finally back! Do you feel like explaining anything you did

today?" We are the only ones in the room, so he can elaborate on any potentially dark details without worrying about someone like Yukimura overhearing it.

"I'm aware that you were with Hirata's group today. Did you notice anything strange while you were there?"

"Huh? Were you watching me?"

"Not you, but someone else who was there with you." I had absolutely no idea we were being spied on. I guess I shouldn't be surprised since it's him.

"Uhh, was it Karuizawa?" I didn't have much information to go off of, but she was acting the most out of character.

Kiyotaka nods in confirmation.

"That's right. I still have one more thing to do before she becomes our pawn."

What the hell am I going to do with him. In the white room, the first thing he did when we were the last kids alive was manipulate me into helping him succeed in the tasks.

"Haah, I guess I shouldn't be surprised. Did you blackmail her or something?"

"Not yet, but I will."

I feel slightly bad for Karuizawa, but I'm not going to prevent Kiyotaka from doing anything. She will probably be useful anyway.

"Hmm... I guess I'll leave you to it. But if you have the time, do you want to look for a pattern in the Target selection with me?"

"Sorry, but I'm slightly busy. I need to contact Hirata in a few minutes."

"Oh, okay." I was kind of looking forward to finding it with him but I guess I can do it myself.

"...Once I'm done with Hirata, I'll do it with you. Don't worry." He suddenly decided to adjust his schedule.

"Did you just read my mind or something?"

"You were hiding your disappointment worse than Karuizawa trying to hide her worry."

Yep, he saw right through me. But at least I get to attempt at crushing the other classes with him again.

\*\*\*

"Okay, have you done everything for today?"

"Yeah, sorry for the wait. You wanted to look at that sheet of names with me, right?"

It took even longer than we both anticipated, with Hirata being slightly hesitant to follow along with Kiyotaka's request.

"Yup! If we find a pattern, we can achieve another landslide victory!"

Just then, a knock on the door interrupts my cheers. I swear that

if anything else stops me from spending time with Kiyotaka, I will... the door opens to reveal an unordinary large boy standing at the door. His features suggest African-American genetics and a LOT of body building. He's almost the size of a tank.

"Follow me." He says shortly and gestures for both of us to 'follow him'. I guess our fun time together has been brought to a close once again.

"Now."

"Uh, not thanks," I try to prevent Kiyotaka from standing up, but he does anyway.

"Let's go, Niharu. This might be important."

"Aw, but we're already doing something important!"

He doesn't bother to reply, and just walks over to the tank. I don't have any choice but to stand by him as he nods to the boy.

He pivots on his feet and starts dutifully marching down the corridor, glancing at us to make sure we are behind him.

"Uh, What's your name?"

"Albert."

"Oh, are you from America? That's an English name."

"Yes."

*"You know, we can speak English fluently."* I tell him in his native language. His eyes widen and he halts his march.

*"Did you live there too? Nobody here has spoken it as well as you just did."*

*"No, we grew up here. But we had good teachers. Where are you taking us?"* Kiyotaka prompts him to continue walking.

*"Ah, sorry, let's keep going. I'm taking you to the leader of my class, Ryuuken."* Suprisingly, when Albert speaks English, he is much more talkative. I even caught a glimpse of excitement in his tone.

We took a few more turns and used an elevator to descend onto the third floor, which contains more rooms for students to sleep in. Albert stopped outside one of the first doors in the corridor and knocked twice.

Ryuuens most loyal followers, Ishizaki, opened the door for him.

"Uhh, boss, Albert is back!" He called over his shoulder.

"Did he bring those maggots with him?" Ryuuens belligerent echoed from behind Ishizaki.

"Yeah!"

"Bring them in!"

Ishizaki turns to us awkwardly. "Uh, you heard the man. You gonna come inside?"

"Of course," Kiyotaka steps through the doorframe without hesitation. I guess we aren't in danger or anything, but it still felt impressive to me.

We passed by Ishizaki and found the magenta-haired boy sprawled across the room's couch. The moment we came into his vision, his eyes narrowed and he sat up immediately.

"You two bastards better explain yourselves," he said, without even muttering a single 'kuku'. He must be furious.

"Explain what?" Kiyotaka asks indifferent.

"Argh, I'll be honest with you. All of the classes teamed up on yours, and we found a pattern in how the Targets are chosen. You guys are absolutely fucked," he says, before he leans in and lowers his voice into a more threatening tone. "But the Dragon Group's leader didn't match the rest of the pattern. But what if it really did? What if the Target was that imbecile Kanzaki?"

There was a tense moment of silence as he glared at us, waiting for us to make a move, like a snake stalking it's prey.

"That just sounds like the pattern is wrong."

"Don't feed me that BULLSHIT," he slammed the side table next to him for emphasis. Even though the words weren't directed at him, Ishizaki was in the corner of the room, cowering.

"We had nine names to go off of. *FUCKING NINE!* Now my leadership will be questioned again, which I don't need after the *fucking* island results."

He was ranting with even more obscene language than usual. His position in his class would already be precarious at this point, so losing another fifty points to us might even be a finishing blow.

"So how the fuck did you do it?"

"Who knows?"

Ryuuen suddenly launches a roundhouse kick directly at Kiyotaka's head. He doesn't even blink as the shoe flies towards him, and just raises his arm to intercept it. Ryuuen's foot connects with his arm, and a loud thud reverberates the room.

Both of them remain unscathed from the encounter. Ryuuen smirks.

"So you can fight, huh? Keep in mind I have Albert licking my shoes if you ever retaliate against me. Now, I'll ask again. What did you do to get that email?"

"Who knows." His noncommittal answers enraged Ryuuen further, but he held himself back from exploding completely.

"ISHIZAKI!"

"Y-Yes, Ryuuen-san?"

"Get these two out of my fucking sight," he says and spits at Kiyotaka's feet.

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**Another chapter that I'm not completely satisfied with, but it's good enough to be published.**

Even with my new schedule, this update was way later than it should've been. Any updates in the future should be at least slightly faster than this one.

"Kei isn't important. Go to sleep." -TimmyVoszi

**A/N**

For school reasons, I cant update this story every two days anymore. I can guarantee that it wont be discontinued or put on hold, but new parts of the story will come slower. Maybe twice a week? Sorry and thanks.

My friend sent me a video of Moonlight Sonata 3rd Movement and told me to play it... I agreed and what the fuck. I probably can't even play it at a quarter of the original speed.

## Volume 4 Chapter 6 - Emails

### Niharu POV

Around dinner, Kiyotaka and I went out to some restaurant to discuss the things Ryuuen had said. Personally, I wanted to just find the pattern with him and then guess the Targets before the other classes, but nope, there is another thing in my way.

In this restaurant, students have a choice of open dining, in a large space full of tables, or a private room with one large table. Of course, I forced Kiyotaka to choose the private room.

"Why? The restaurant is nearly empty. We won't be overheard if we take an isolated table," Kiyotaka complained. He always was a minimalist.

"It's just the better option. We would like a private room, please," I addressed the waiter. Before Kiyotaka could complain anymore, they nodded and started walking away.

"Don't whine."

"I was planning on accepting my fate," he says in resignation.

"Good. Why do we need to do this anyway? It's not like Ryuuen put some encrypted message in his words."

We started following the waiter as he explained.

"Don't you think it's strange that he told us about the other classes forming an alliance against us?"

"Oh, I think I know where you're going with this. He supposedly did it to explain how he knew Kanzaki was the real Target."

"Yes, he did it so he could ask how we had the Target email on your phone. He asked us twice, then told us to leave without trying to force anything out of us."

What he's saying is that Ryuuen had a different reason as to why he gave us that information. He wrote it off as something to set up his own question, but he barely cared about that question.

"...I can bet he has ulterior motives, but it's kind of hard to imagine what it would be. I'll start with a lemonade, please."

"I'll have water with ice," Kiyotaka said, sending the waiter away. Once they left and closed the door behind them, he turned back to me.

"Woah, before you say anything, what the hell? You just ordered chilled water?" I interrupt him before he starts talking. He just shrugs.



"I don't feel like much today."

A pathetic excuse for ordering chilled water like a psychopath. He lacks empathy, but that isn't as bad as what he just did.

"Can we get on with it?"

"In a few minutes. Even at this time of day, coffee is a better option. Or maybe tea?"

"I'm not going to respond to that. Maybe Ryuen did it to threaten us in some way?"

"Hmm, you could've even ordered lemonade like I did," I said thoughtfully. If he thinks I'll stop teasing him that easily, he's wrong.

Unfortunately, something important enough to actually stop me from teasing him happens. Our phones ring at the same time, and considering the topic of the conversation, we both immediately checked the notification.

*"The Tiger Group's test has ended.*

*Students from the Tiger Group are no longer required to participate. Please be careful not to disturb the other students".*

*"The Snake Group's test has ended.*

*Students from the Snake Group are no longer required to participate. Please be careful not to disturb the other students".*

*"The Dog Group's test has ended.*

*Students from the Dog Group are no longer required to participate. Please be careful not to disturb the other students".*

And so on. We watched in silence as all of the group's tests were finished, one by one. I'm a bit frustrated since there might've been something I could've done about it.

"...I guess it's over now," Kiyotaka said. He doesn't show much emotion, but he didn't seem at all bothered by the results.

"Aren't you disappointed? If we tried to find the pattern, there would've been a chance for us to crush everyone again."

"Not really. If every Group results in outcome 3, then we might only lose a hundred points, depending on what Kouenji guessed. And, in the end, winning the test wasn't my goal."

Ah, I forgot. He's busy with Karuizawa. I honestly don't know what he sees in the girl, but I guess she will be useful in the future.

"Right. Well, if all of the groups finished at around the same time, it's possible that one of the classes broke their agreement and guessed all of them."

"That's what I was thinking. I can't imagine Ichinose or Katsuragi doing something like that, so if that's the case..."

"Class C would win by a landslide." I finish his sentence.

"Yup. If that happened, then they've probably already replaced Class B," Kiyotaka calculated. If Class C guessed every target other

than the Dragon Group's correctly, then they would gain 350 class points, and Ichinose would lose another 150.

"Aha... but wouldn't they all have the alliance enforcement by some sort of contract?" I ask.

"If that's the case, then the contract would go along the lines of, *'all of the classes signing the contract cannot guess the Targets without discussing it with the other classes.'* Or at least, what I just said without loopholes. I can't imagine that the school would enforce a contract like that."

"Ooh, so you think Ryuen tricked them into thinking the deal was protected by the school, when it was actually denied?"

"It's a possibility."

I'm starting to feel more and more excited by this school. Who knew the special exams could be so entertaining?

\*\*\*

In the end, our discussion didn't lead to much, but it was still eventful thanks to the exams sudden end. As we left the restaurant, I could see some Class B students frantically talking into their phones and running around. This clearly wasn't a part of their plan.

"It's now highly likely Ryuen betrayed their alliance," Kiyotaka said, observing some of the students questioning Ishizaki and a group of Class C boys, who were obviously gloating and sending taunts at them.

"Yeah. Should we continue under the assumption that that is exactly what happened?"

"...Not yet. Let's gather some more information."

I am pretty curious about what happened, but to be honest, I really don't feel like any info gathering. I'd rather go sleep or watch a movie.

"Ah, I'll leave you to that. I could fall asleep at any second now, so how about we talk about this tomorrow?"

Classic me, dumping more responsibility on Kiyotaka. I don't feel bad at all.

### **Kiyotaka POV**

Before I could even protest, Niharu was gone, leaving me outside the cafe to watch Class B in fall into a state of turmoil. If Ryuen really did do what I think he did, then his class won't be trusted for the rest of our time at this school, but the sheer amount of points he gains from it would make it worthwhile. I think I might pay him a visit.

\*\*\*

Outside of Ryuen's room, a small crowd had already formed. Ichinose was there angrily knocking on the door, with Katsuragi standing behind her. He seems to be troubled, but his nerves aren't

as bad as Ichinose.

As I approached, the door opened to reveal the magenta-haired boy standing in the door frame in all of his twisted glory. His arrogant gait is put on full display as he looks down on everyone in front of him. I can't help but be reminded of Kouenji.

"Care to explain the results, Ryuuken-kun? We agreed that-"

"I only want to talk to the baldy," he says with a smirk, barely sparing her a glance. A few of her classmates frown, but of course Ryuuken ignores them as well. Instead, his eyes flick to me.

"That bastard can come too, if he wants. The rest of you can stop wasting your time."

The Class B students protest in vain as I contemplate the offer.

For some reason, he is inviting me to his meeting with Katsuragi. It might be for the same reason he told me about the alliance in advance, and I still don't know what that reason is.

"Sorry, Ichinose. I'll try to help you later if it's possible," I say. Walking past her without saying anything would be inappropriate considering the situation.

"Eh? If you really want too... Thanks, Ayanokouji-kun!" Ichinose decides to accept the help. With a nod, I leave her behind and enter Ryuuken's room once again.

The atmosphere is considerably different from the last time I visited. Ishizaki was whistling cheerfully, and the other roommates are present and playing a game of cards.

"As Ichinose said, your actions breach the rules of the contract we signed." Katsuragi, of course, wants to get straight down to business.

"Kukuku, everything I did was within the rules. But forget that. The reason we're all here is to ask how many groups you recovered." Ryuuken's sneer turned into a slight frown for the first time since the exam ended.

"My stupid dogs were slow to follow my commands. The moment the first groups were announced as over, other groups finished before we sent the email."

One thing I didn't mention with Niharu in our discussion was how every group ended, which includes the groups with Class C Targets. So there class couldn't be the only ones responsible for the exams abrupt ending. With Class B in a state of confusion, it's clear who that is.

"If that's what you want to know, then you can just wait for the results. And why did you bring Ayanokouji with us?"

"Kuku..." instead of answering, he turns to me. "Do you have any idea why?"

"I can't be certain of anything."

"Hm, then I might as well say it. You're the only person in this school who can challenge me, so the more involved you are, the more chances I get to fight and beat you."

Suprisingly, he simply gave me free information just so I might take action against it, putting himself at a disadvantage for entertainment.

"That's ridiculous." Katsuragi doesn't hesitate to cut his claims down.

"Oh? You think so? I honestly don't care. Think what you want."

Katsuragi just eyes us with suspicion. If Ryuuen was lying, the next most likely theory would be us collaborating together.

"Uh, I'm sick of you being so fucking careful. At least tell me if you sent Class C's Targets?"

Katsuragi sighs. "An answer won't help me in any way, so forget it."

"I'll take that as a yes."

Ryuuen asked him that to make an early calculation of the class points he will gain. If Class A guessed their Targets, the gap between them and Class B would be much smaller. It would only take a few behavioral deductions to knock them back down to third place.

"Think what you want. It doesn't affect me," Katsuragi echoes his words. "Is that all?"

"Not yet. Perhaps this guy did something in the exam too?" He points a finger at me.

"Believe what you want. I have something pretty urgent to do, so I'll be leaving now."

"Hm? It's urgent? How intriguing," Ryuuen says sarcastically, but it's possible he might actually get someone to spy on me.

"It's nothing exciting."

He doesn't say anything else and silently observes me as I leave the room.

---

Sorry for another long wait, I'm losing a bit of motivation to write. It's not that I'm stopping, but it's nothing compared to writing 4 chapters a week like when I first started.

That's pretty much the end of Volume 4. I've decided to skip Volume 4.5, but I might make a for 5.5 depending on the story.

Also, I don't have much time to check for any grammatical mistakes, so there might be more errors from here on. When V6Y2 comes out, I'll go back over everything.



## Volume 4.5 Chapter 1 - Aftermath

### Niharu POV

Today would have been the final day of the Zodiac Exam, but thanks to Ryuuen's betrayal, the Targets have all been guessed, and the compulsory meetings are now canceled. Everyone is using the free time they gained to hang out with their friends, while I... I think I'm doing that too?

"Uhh..." I want to start the conversation, but the atmosphere is making it pretty hard.

"The plan was a success," Kiyotaka says.

"I can see that..."

"Huh? She's knows about it? H-How many other people know about it?" Karuizawa, who is coincidentally sitting next to me, asks in a trembling voice.

"Don't worry, your secret is safe. Nobody other than us three know," he assures her, but it doesn't seem to be working. I was expecting her to shuffle away from me, but instead she came closer to whisper something in my ear.

"So, uh, have you seen what he's really like?" She points at Kiyotaka, not even trying to hide that her whispers are about him.

"What do you mean?"

"Wait, if you haven't..." she seems to be having trouble putting her thoughts into words.

"Uh... just in case... he isn't a good person... actually, uh... he's a terrible person."

I guess Kiyotaka's blackmailing is really getting to her. I don't know what he did, but it can't be good.

"Hah, he's a bit cold sometimes, but you'll get used to it quickly."

No matter what Kiyotaka does, I'm going to trust him to the very end. Anyway, I'm quite a messed up human being too, so I probably won't be affected by it.

Karuizawa's eyes widened in a slight panic. "No, that's not what I mean!" She gives up on whispering to put more emphasis in her words.

"Don't tease her, Niharu."

"Aw, you're no fun. Well, if you're talking about when his eyes go all dark, then I know about it."

"That's it! Wait, why do you still talk to him?" Her expression

darkens even further. Her next guess would be that Kiyotaka is somehow blackmailing me as well.

"Because he's my friend."

"But..."

"Hah, I'm not being threatened or anything. We've known each other for our entire lives."

"Woah... do you know how did he ended up so twisted?"

"I'm right here."

Despite her anxiety, Karuizawa doesn't hesitate to insult the person that has complete control over her school life. Is she just being brave?

"Heh, I wouldn't say that if I was in your situation. Anyway, he has some pretty unique circumstances," I say. And as an afterthought, "hm, I guess you can say I do too."

Karuizawa pauses for a moment, unsure of where to start.

"To make this simple, I forbid you from asking us about our past," I say. Before this meeting, Kiyotaka explained Karuizawa's situation, and also gave me permission to order her around.

"Huh? I don't care that much about your past, but can she just boss me around like that?" She asks Kiyotaka.

"Yes. Your secrets will be exposed if you go against her will."

She obviously didn't take the news well. "Wha-? My life is getting worse every day..."

"Haha, Kiyotaka and I are just partners in crime. I won't make you do anything extra!" I try to sound more upbeat, and give her a pat on the shoulder.

"That's only a part of the problem..." she sighed. "What do you guys even want with me anyway?"

I let Kiyotaka answer the question since he's the one who 'employed' her.

"Most of the instructions we give you will have something to do with the special exams. You'll see what I mean eventually."

"Pfft. You blackmailed and nearly raped me for the *school exams*?" She asks incredulously, obviously not believing him for a second. Wait, what? He nearly raped her?

"You can say that," Kiyotaka confirms, with a slight glance in my direction.

"Uh, Kiyotaka, we need to talk later. I think you missed a *few details*."

My tone causes him to flinch. "Okay."

I honestly don't know why I'm getting so worked up about it. Even if he killed somebody, I normally wouldn't bat an eye, but for some reason, I hate the idea of him sexually assaulting her.

"See? He's way worse than you think!" Karuizawa understandably

took my reaction as a sign that I didn't think he would go that far.

"Don't be mistaken. I didn't underestimate how flawed he is."

"Yeah, if anything, she's more flawed than I am."

"What... you're fine with him doing that, Hasegawa? Who the hell are you g-"

"Hey!" I interrupted her. "If you can't even follow the very first command, then you might as well be dirt to us." I say something that Kiyotaka would think. After so many years with him, I have a pretty accurate idea of what goes on in his head.

Karuizawa gets shocked into silence by my sudden threat. It'll be kinda fun having her around.

### **Kiyotaka POV**

After introducing Karuizawa to Niharu as our puppet, the next thing I need to do is meet with Ichinose and the other Class B representatives to explain their dire situation brought upon them by Ryuen. The more helpful I am, the more willing they would be to collaborate in the future.

They may be the weakest of the four classes, but having more manpower is always a good thing, just like in the exam that just ended yesterday. With the way the special tests have been structured so far, sharing resources will always give you the upper hand.

"Ayanokouji-kun!" Ichinose called out to me from a table set up in the shade of the main deck. The rest of the Class B students are also already there, showing me a mixed variety of emotions.

As expected, Kanzaki is trying with the best of his ability to find anything suspicious about my behavior, and some of the others just openly displayed curiosity.

"Hey, sorry if I kept you guys waiting."

"Oh, it's no problem at all. You've put in a lot of effort to help us." Ichinose waves it off with a smile, but there is a tiny crack in her usual constant optimism and cheerfulness.

"That's good to know. So how much do you guys know about what happened in the exam? I'll try to fill in the gaps afterwards."

Suddenly, one of the girls burst into laughter. Everyone watched her in bemused silence until she finished. "Aha, sorry about that. Like, just pretend I'm not here."

"What was that about, Mako-chan?"

"Ahem. Nothing," she said, trying to keep a straight face.

"...Erm, okay then..." Ichinose didn't know how to continue.

"Ah, I made everything awkward. How about I explain it?" The other girl offered. Without waiting for a reply, she turns to me.

"I think you know everyone here except me, so My name's Amikura Mako. Don't forget it," she said playfully.



"I would never. I'm Ayanokouji Kiyotaka."

"Heh, I know who you are. Anyway, we have, like, no idea about what happened yesterday. Everything just moved along so quickly." The others looked slightly uncomfortable about the way she said it, but nobody objected. This might take longer than expected.

"Okay. Did Ryuen approach you at any time yesterday?" Kanzaki's eyes flicker in recognition.

"He approached me after the morning exam period. He said that he wanted to team up with our class, but I denied him instantly."

"Ryuen came to me, too." Ichinose gasps. Under Kanzaki's searching gaze, she quickly adds, "I also rejected his offer."

I always found it hard to imagine that Ichinose or Kanzaki decided to team up with Class C, which is one of the reasons as to why I'm meeting up with them like this. My suspicions have so far been correct.

"So who accepted his offer? He received help from your class to find the Targets yesterday."

"Huh?"

"What?"

It's also possible that Ryuen was bluffing and he only received help from Class A, which would also be enough to find a pattern, but I won't let go of the possibility that it was the truth.

"Amikura. If you're here, you must be one of the leading figures in your class. Did he ask you anything?"

She shakes her head. "I'm not one of the leaders, Honami-chan does all the work. And no, Ryuen hasn't asked me anything. What about you, Tetsuya-kun?"

The boy next to her also denied it. This makes me almost certain that there is a was a traitor, if Class B did leak their Targets. However, Class B would be the last place I would expect to find a traitor.

"It's possible that Ryuen lied, but if there was a traitor, does anybody come to mind?"

"No way. It's a terrible thing to suspect anyone of such a thing," Ichinose immediately denies it.

"Honami-chan is right. Nobody betrayed us." The boy named Tetsuya also didn't even consider it for a second. I suppose that's just how most of Class B is. However, the other two are being more contemplative before saying anything.

"Hmm... I won't accuse anyone, but..." Kanzaki is reluctant to name a suspect.

"I also won't blame anyone, but iff the top of my head, Yuki-chan is probably the most distant person in the class."

"Huh? What are you saying?"

"Don't worry, Tetsuya. I'm not saying it means she would do something like that."

"That's the same thing I was thinking," Kanzaki admits.

I don't really care if there is a traitor, nor if they are somehow revealed, but if I was trying to find out who it is, then this Yuki would be one of the first people I would go to. A Class B student who isn't completely outgoing and friendly is very rare.

"I let you guys figure it out on your own. Shall I continue?" Ichinose looks extremely uncomfortable with the direction the conversation is going in, and it's not my place to meddle anyway.

She gladly accepts to change the subject. "Let's leave that talk for later. Please keep going, Ayanokouji-kun."

"Okay. So Ryuuen teamed up with other classes to find a pattern in the selection of the Targets."

"Huh? There was a pattern?"

"Well, it's a theory I came up with in the beginning, and it was what Ryuuen claimed hours before guessing all of the Targets."

"Woah! Slow down!" Amikura interjected. "Class C guessed them all? I knew they had something to do with it, but that's crazy!"

"Uhh, Mako-chan, where have you been all this time?"

"...The pool."

Everyone let out a sigh, causing Amikura to hold up her hands in defense. "What? I'm just making the most of my holiday!"

"Hah, you've always been a free spirit. Can you continue, Ayanokouji-kun?"

"Wait. We will lose our place as Class B if they guessed them all correctly!" It was Kanzaki's turn to speak up. The rest of them paled after doing the maths.

"Don't worry, it's not over yet."

"What? Is it possible they messed up?"

"Nope, I'm almost certain they got it all right. But their own Targets were also guessed."

"Ohh, I didn't think of that!" Amikura gasped. "Was it your class, Ayanokouji?"

"It was Class A. But either way, the class standings will come down to the slightest point deductions, so tell your classmates to be extra careful."

If it comes down to behavior and absences, then Ichinose's class would easily pull ahead in terms of points, but that isn't all there is to it.

"Before you say you have an advantage over him, do you remember Sudou's trial?" It took a moment before it clicked in.

"...Oh, yeah."

Ryuuen has proven that he would play dirty to hurt his enemies, even if it damages him as well. If this certain outcome became reality, Ryuuen would know that his class can't keep up, and try to drag Class B down instead of rising himself up.

"Try to avoid any traps he lays out for you. That's all I know, so I'll be leaving now."

Ichinose took a moment to process my words before standing up. "Thanks for that, Ayanokouji-kun. It really helped."

"No problem."

"Oh, can I get your number before you go?" Asked Amikura suddenly.

"Ooh, Mako-chan-"

"Tetsuya, I know you just want to get back at me after all that teasing about Sayo. It won't work." Amikura barely reacted to his words, causing him to give up early.

"Ugh, I just can't beat you. Whatever."

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**Like I said last time, I'm not going to be spending much time on editing, so just commenting on any major mistakes will help.**

**This chapter was pretty much just dialogue, so I'll try to bring more action in for the rest of 4.5. Sex is coming soon.**

**"Jayemiya has had a bit of an attitude lately." -me**

## Volume 4.5 Chapter 2 - Zodiac Results

(A/N what I said in the afterword in the previous chapter can be misinterpreted as me saying sex is specifically in this chapter. It won't be on the cruise, sorry.)

### Kiyotaka POV

I woke up today to a few missed calls and texts from Amikura. Apparently, and as I expected, Ryuuen has begun to sabotage her classmates, so he can take their position as one of the higher classes.

*"You were right! Last night some bitch from Class C spilled their drink all over me!" (Amikura Mako)*

I'm starting to get a solid picture of what Amikura's personality is like.

*"Are you sure it wasn't an accident?" (Ayanokouji Kiyotaka)*

*"That's not all! My classmates have all been complaining about them too. It's mostly just shoving in the hallways."*

It sounds like Ryuuen is starting small, just trying simple provocation while passing in the hallways. However, if that doesn't work, Ryuuen will definitely turn to more underhanded and brutal tactics.

*"Be careful. I doubt that's all he's planning on doing." (Ayanokouji Kiyotaka)*

*"Yeah, yeah, don't worry about us. We can stay on top ez!" (Amikura Mako)*

*"Ez?" (Ayanokouji Kiyotaka)*

"Ez" is grammatically incorrect, but I can't think of a word she may have mistyped that fits the sentence.

*"...Wdym?" (Amikura Mako)*

Is she communicating with some sort of code for me to decipher? If she is, then I don't have time for it... or maybe there is a reason she is encrypting her messages? I find it hard to imagine that her phone is being traced by other students.

*"...It doesn't matter. Just stay alert, and warn your classmates that this is only the beginning. That's all you can do for now." (Ayanokouji Kiyotaka)*

*"Okay. You got it, chief!" (Amikura Mako)*

\*\*\*

While I was on the way to lunch, I found myself in front of one of

the situations I warned Amikura about. Ryuen must be ramping up the intensity of his attacks already, even though he started just yesterday.

"Oi! What the hell was that for!" A Class C boy yelled.

"Uh... um..." the girl he's targeting just looks at the ground, clearly getting overwhelmed by his shouting. The boy smirked.

"Hey!" A very angry voice carried down the hallway. I turn to find Ichinose storming down the corridor with fury glinting in her eyes. She barely acknowledges me and stands next to her friend.

"Can you guys please stop doing this? We are sick and tired of it!"

That was the most aggressive sentence Ichinose could think of. Despite all of her flare, I guess she's still a gentle person at heart.

"Why should I? She just yanked the carpet from underneath me!"

"Oh, just stop! Chihiro-chan obviously didn't do anything!"

"Huh? Don't defend her! The carpet is all rumpled right there!" He points next to where Ichinose is standing. Compared to Ishizaki and some of the other boys in his class, his acting skills and determination are much more reassuring.

"Come on, Chihiro-chan. Let's just leave."

That was the best option. The carpet was indeed tampered with, and if they stood here and argued until a teacher possibly came, the evidence would point at them.

The security camera at the end of the hallway may have captured the incident, but the carpet might've been set up the night before, and the resolution might affect its accuracy.

"Hey!" The boy watches as his prey walk away without a hint of dissatisfaction. If the trap was truly to frame that girl, the plan wasn't thought out at all.

"Ichinose." I might as well tell her my theory.

"Hey, Ayanokouji-kun. Sorry if you saw a dark side of me back there."

"Don't worry about it. Did anything about that trap seem to stick out?"

Ichinose pondered the question for a moment. "No, but it was the most detailed one so far."

"And yet, it didn't take much to simply walk away."

Ichinose should be smart enough to put together what I'm hinting at.

"...So you don't think they're trying to frame us?" Thankfully, she caught on pretty quickly. The Class C boy behind her twitched slightly.

"At least not for now. They're probably just trying to tire you out at the start, while still increasing the intensity of the traps so you don't suspect anything."

The boy coughed loudly. "Argh! How did you just..." my theory is pretty much confirmed now.

"If that's what they're trying to do, then it's working." Ichinose rubbed her eyes in frustration. "But when did you find that out?"

"After seeing how this trap was set up. And, just remember that Ryuuen's attacks will only get worse."

"Huh? You just thought of that now?"

"Well, yes. The results of the exam are being announced soon, so I'll see you later. Bye."

"Eh? But... okay..."

### **Niharu POV**

"Ah, there you are, Kiyotaka!"

As usual, Kiyotaka got to our friend group meeting a few minutes late. The next thing he always does is make some halfhearted excuse:

"Sorry I'm late, everyone. Something happened while I was on the way here that slowed me down a bit."

Haruka raised her eyebrow cynically. "Hmm, this time you didn't even bother to make up a story. Well, whatever. Let's just get on with this karaoke! You wanna duo, Haru?"

"Oh, uhm..." I don't understand how she can change her focus so quickly and easily.

"Ahh, you want to go with Kiyopon, don't you?" She grins triumphantly. That's not what what was on my mind, but I guess she's right in some ways.

"I do, but right now I'll just wait for the exam results. It should be coming any minute now, and I'll do some singing after."

"Ugh, you're way to serious. Just like that guy over there," she says, pointing at Kiyotaka who's dipping some fries in a soft drink.

"I swear-" she suddenly stops talking when she notices his strange behavior, drawing the attention of the others to him too. He's too curious for his own good.

"Kiyopon?"

"Yes?"

"Uhh..." she gestures to the soaked fries in his hand. He just stares back at her blankly.

"...Why the hell are you dipping those fries in my lemonade?"

"Oh, sorry, I didn't know it was yours. Here," he says, sliding the drink across the table towards her.

"Pfft," Akito struggles to hold in his laughter as Haruka stares into her cup in, lost at what to do next.

"...Haru, is this one of those times where he has no clue about what is the normal thing to do?"

"That's exactly right."

"Aha, sometimes I wonder if you two are from the same planet as us," Maya says in wonder as Kiyotaka obliviously reaches for another chip.

"Yeah, I find it hard to believe that these are the two geniuses leading our class to victory."

Before the conversation could go on, our phones beeped to alert us that the school has finally sent us the email we've been waiting for.

"Oooh, this is what you've been waiting for, Haru!" Haruka says, temporarily forgetting the scene Kiyotaka caused.

*Rat Group - Outcome 3, due to the traitor's correct assessment.*

*Cow Group - Outcome 3, due to the traitor's correct assessment.*

*Tiger Group - Outcome 3, due to the traitor's correct assessment.*

*Dragon Group - Outcome 4, due to the traitor's incorrect assessment.*

*Snake Group - Outcome 3, due to the traitor's correct assessment.*

*Horse Group - Outcome 3, due to the traitor's correct assessment.*

*Sheep Group - Outcome 3, due to the traitor's correct assessment.*

*Monkey Group - Outcome 3, due to the traitor's correct assessment.*

*Bird Group - Outcome 3, due to the traitor's correct assessment.*

*Group - Outcome 3, due to the traitor's correct assessment.*

*Dog Group - Outcome 3, due to the traitor's correct assessment.*

*Boar Group - Outcome 3, due to the traitor's correct assessment.*

It is as Kiyotaka and I predicted. The only group guessed incorrectly was the Dragon Group, thanks to yours truly. And as for the point changes-

*Class A • 0 class points, 1.5M private points.*

*Class B • -100 class points, 0.5M private points.*

*Class C • +200 class points, 4.0M private points.*

*Class D • -100 class points, 0.5M private points.*

"Wait, what?" We haven't yet informed the others on the situation, so obviously the results would seemingly contradict our relaxed attitudes.

On the surface, it looks like we were thoroughly crushed, and in reality, we were only slightly crushed. Class C owes us a bunch of points, Karuizawa became my pet, and Class B are officially cooperating with us now. What really shocks me is that Kouenji guessed correctly.

"Yo, Kouenji actually found the Target! Or was it luck?" I ask Kiyotaka.

"We can find out later. For now, we shouldn't leave everyone in the dark," he say, nodding at the four people surrounding us.

### **Hirata POV**

"Huh? Isn't this a bit sudden?" I ask. Karuizawa-san just scratches her head awkwardly.

"I just think..." she struggles to find the right words. "...You know how this relationship is for my protection, right?"

"Of course."

When she first told me about her past, I couldn't help but compare it to what my friend went through. That day... that day will haunt me for the rest of my life, and his suffering could've been avoided if I wasn't scared to take action. Since then, I've sworn to never make the same mistake again. Helping Karuizawa-san is just one of the first steps to repent.

"Well, Ayanokouji and Hasegawa are pretty popular in the class, so it might be better to interact with them a but more..."

"So you want to have a double date with them?" Although what she's saying makes sense, I don't get how she suddenly became so close to them. I haven't even seen the three of them properly interact before.

"Well, yeah. They've already agreed."

"What? How did you... did Ayanokouji meet up with you recently?"

She blinks in surprise at my question. "How did you know?"

"He asked me to get you to meet with him at the bottom of the ship."

"Uh-" she trips over her tongue. In a flash, her expression went from surprise to confusion, and maybe even fear.

"Are you alright, Karuizawa-san?"

"T-That..." she mutters something inaudible to me. Did something I say freak her out?

"Karuizawa-san?"

"F-Forget it." Her face is as pale as a ghost. Whatever the problem is, it seems very serious.

"Does it have something to do with Manabe?"

"No..."

That was the only major problem she's recently had that I could think of. Stumped for what to say next, I just stood there awkwardly.

### **Kei POV**

I can't even comprehend What's happening. After he saved me from those girls and turned me into his slave, it turns out Ayanokouji was responsible for the situation from the start. Somehow, he influenced everyone into doing what he wanted, killing two birds with one stone... no, he didn't even use a stone. He now has the power to blackmail four different students into doing whatever he wants, and he barely had to do anything himself.

So he's a fucking genius over being a complete psychopath. The worst combination you can get. I already knew he was amazing



from what he's done thus far, but at this point it's absolutely terrifying.

"Actually... j-just forget about the double date thing," I try to sound as natural as possible, but I think my voice cracks halfway through.

"Wait." Hirata sadly doesn't fall for it. Maybe if I started acting a few seconds earlier, it could've worked... "If there is something serious bothering you, you can always tell me. I'll try to help to the best of my ability."

There is genuine concern in his voice. I feel bad for not telling him since he'll probably start to worry about me, but I don't really have a choice.

"Everything is fine. The issue with Manabe was cleared up too."

"Really? That's great! Did you apologize to them?"

The most explicit order Ayanokouji has given me so far is to not tell anyone about his involvement in the incident with those other girls, so I lie to not complicate things.

"Aha, that's right. I didn't think it would work, but I said sorry and they actually accepted it."

The news was luckily enough to make Hirata forget about my little freak out.

"See? I told you it would work! I'm proud of you for taking my advice to heart." It's slightly ironic since it *definitely* didn't work when I tried it, but I hold back my bitterness.

"Yeah, thanks for that. So, uh, for now you can forget that double date thing, but it might happen in the future," I say, trying to wrap up the conversation. There's no way I'm gonna organize a meeting with those two demons after what I just discovered.

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Once again, I don't have time to edit any mistakes.

Sorry about the upload time. This is the longest you've had to wait for an update so far, all because Author-san forgot to update the story for two days while binge watching anime.

This is probably the end of their time on the cruise ship, and I have some things planned for the sports festival. How will things go with Kei now that she knows who set her up? Find out when I finish season 2!

Also, thanks in advance for 25K views. I was planning on thanking you guys at 20K, but it hit 22K before the next chapter could come out. The support is unbelievable.

"Nooo I binged the whole series today just to wait for this chapter" -NAK4769

"Arigato, author-sama 🍷🍷" -Upgrayde99

# Volume 5 Chapter 1 - The First Night Back

## Kiyotaka POV

We arrived back on school campus just before dinner, ready to dive back into classes starting from the day after tomorrow. Since it's late and we just came back from the cruise, the teachers allowed us to just return to our dorms for the night.

"You know, I've kind of missed doing stuff like this with you," Niharu says, stirring her favorite type of soup with a cooking spoon.

"Yeah, me too. Can you pass that grater over there?"

"Sure." After handing it to me, she continues the conversation. "Tomorrow is the first day of April, so we'll see who came out on top of the cruise. Isn't that exciting?"

Class A is guaranteed to stay at the highest position, but all of the other class standings are much more unstable. With Ryuen sacrificing his own points to decrease Class B's, it's also possible for us to jump up one or two spots.

"Definitely. We might even be Class B by tomorrow."

"Hah... well, I might be a bit disappointed about that," she says with a hint of bitterness.

"Hm?"

"Oh, I don't know... this whole class competition thing was kinda exciting when it started, but we're sorta just better than everyone else. Do you think the other classes can hold up against us for three years?" She raises her hands in self deprecation at our intelligence.

She's basically saying that our rivals just aren't good enough, which I suppose is true. I'm beginning to get a grasp of how effective the white room's curriculum is.

"...If you want, I can try to swap classes to give you a real challenge," I suggest.

"Oooh, now you're talking. I've thought of that as a possibility before, but which one would you choose? Maybe Ryuen's class would be the best."

Niharu doesn't seem too surprised by my suggestion. In fact, she doesn't hesitate to encourage it.

"You've been thinking about this a lot, haven't you?"

"Uh, yeah. Can you pass me those herbs?"

"Here. It was only a suggestion, but I could actually do it if you want. If it's even possible, of course."

Niharu rubs her chin thoughtfully.

"I mean, school would be much worse without you around in class... Hah, I guess I can't have everything."

"That's true. However, if it's possible to change classes, then that opens up a whole new horizon of possibilities."

"Huh? What does that mean?" She stops stirring one of the pots to look at me with intrigue.

"Oh, don't bother. If you've thought about it so much, then at least a few ideas must've crossed your mind."

She opened her mouth, then closed it again, before revealing a sly smile.

"Haha, I swear that I'll get something past you one day. You're right, and it would be really fun if we could put one of those plans into action."

"Oh? What kind of plan are you thinking of?"

As I said, there would be a pretty large number of tactics for us to use if it is possible. I'm curious as to how creative Niharu got while forming plans.

"Hmm... I guess I'll tell you one of the more simple ones. We could make Karuizawa join another class and simply tell her not to go to school. The absences will pile up and that class will slowly lose points until they find a way to expel her."

Her idea was the similar to what I first thought of, although it would be better to send someone like Yamauchi instead.

"Karuizawa has other purposes, but you're on the right track. Getting rid of one of the dead weights in our class would also help us perform better on top of draining the other class' points."

"And how would you get that person to leave our class? They would probably have to give consent to swap out... Heh, never mind, that's a pretty dumb question."

"Yeah. The soup should be ready soon, so I'll go prepare the table."

### **Niharu POV**

"Man, I'm stuffed," I says with a yawn. "I don't know about you, but that soup was better than anything we had on the ship."

I stare at my bowl with longing, but no matter how much I wish for it, the bowl doesn't magically refill itself. I swear that I could easily eat the whole thing again.

"That can't be helped that we're better than most chefs. Do you seriously want more?"

"You would make more for me?" I look at Kiyotaka hopefully.

"Nope. You're just looking at that bowl pretty intensely." I shouldn't have gotten my hopes up.

"Aww, well, yeah. I'd kill to have that soup again."

Kiyotaka just sighs and shakes his head in despair. What's wrong with wanting to eat the food that you enjoy?

"That meal had enough kilojoules to accommodate a person around twice your body weight. Anyway, I need to go take a bath."

With that, he ungentlemanly leaves me to do the dishes. Well, it is my turn to wash them, but that isn't the point.

Suddenly, a certain conversation I had with him on the ship enters my mind. Now that I think about it, he never confirmed or denied anything... should I... no, I shouldn't... yes, I will.

After a moment of contemplation, I follow him to the bathroom.

He shut the door behind him, but I don't think I heard the lock click shut. All I would have to do is open it... knowing him, it probably wouldn't effect him much.

There's no point for me to hesitate here. I open the door and march straight in, to find Kiyotaka undressing to enter the bath.

"Oh, do you need something?"

"Uhh..." I've accomplished the first part of my plan, but now that I'm here, I don't really know how to continue.

"...Sorry for barging in, I just don't feel like waiting for my turn to have a bath, so I thought it would be more efficient if we just both did it at the same time. It's large enough for both of us anyway."

I say the first thing that comes to my mind. For something I pulled together so quickly, I'm kinda proud that the excuse is also backed with solid logic.

"That's a lie."

Oh. I guess I should've seen that one coming.

"Haha, maybe it is. But that doesn't change the fact that I'm having a bath now." I can't lie my way through, but if I give him a choice to leave or stay, I'm guessing he'd stay.

"Okay. If you really want a bath that badly, then you can have it. Just tell me when you're done," he says, and begins to put his shirt back on. This is bad.

"Wait! The real reason I'm here is... do you remember that conversation-"

"Finally," Kiyotaka interrupts me and turns on the bath tap.

"...Huh?"

"I knew why you were here the entire time, but I was waiting for you to actually say it yourself."

Oh. He saw through my lie not just because of his intuition, but also since he knew my intentions from the start. Wait... so he's fine with it? That was easier than I expected. At this point, he's leaning against the bath wall with his legs crossed and eyes closed. I'm not passing up on this opportunity.

After hurriedly taking off my clothes, I clamber into the bath and

take a seat down next to him. As I sit, my shoulder comes in contact with his own one, which makes me excited for some reason.

"...So-

"Not yet. Let me have my bath first," he says without moving. If all I have to do is wait a few minutes, then I'm more than happy to do so.

"Alright, I get it. Can we talk in the meantime?"

"Sure."

"Cool. Damn, I have a lot to talk about." In my mind, I'm already been brainstorming a bunch of things to talk about. Jeez, my heart is racing more than it would after an intense workout, my mind is making calculations like a supercomputer, and I have no idea how my body isn't running around and doing star jumps. I have so much pent-up energy with nowhere to go.

"...Remember, back in the white room, when we used to speculate what it would be like to live in the real world?"

### **Flashback: Kiyotaka POV**

"Your next objective is to defeat your opponents using martial arts," a monotonous voice echoed throughout the room. The girl beside me poked my shoulder.

"Hey, do you think we can get out of here one day?"

I must admit that I've asked myself that question many times, but I'm perplexed at the suddenness of her attempt to strike a conversation.

"Talking outside of the training exercises has killed many of our peers. Do you perhaps want to die too?"

"Pfft, I can talk for the same reason as you. If it was anybody else, they would've been disposed of instantly, but we are getting the best results. That's also why we're the last ones standing here."

As she said this, four men walked into the room in single file, each of them with a distinct black belt around their waist, starkly contrasting with the white that surrounds my entire vision.

"You know, I've thought about it a lot. We supposedly know everything about the world, but nothing about it at the same time. Is it even real?"

She continues to chat, paying no heed towards the men approaching us. Then, out of the corner of my eye, I see her bend her left knee and twist her slightly twist her foot. A stance perfect for launching a spinning kick.

By observing our enemies, I can tell they haven't noticed her positioning, as she successfully veils it with the false intention to whisper something into my ear. She keeps talking about the outside world until the men are in reach, before exploding towards them with suprised ferocity.

As I expected, she pivots on the spot to shoot a spinning kick straight into the closest opponent's jaw, knocking him out cold before he even has a chance to react.

The other three can't hide their surprise, but quickly recollect themselves and take defensive stances.

"If we complete every task they set for us, could we be released one day?" Despite the circumstances, she's still going on about gaining freedom.

"I doubt it. It's highly likely that we'll be here until the day we die."

I step forward and prepare to engage with one of the remaining men. His stance is strong, and I can't find any immediate weaknesses.

"Aw, don't be so pessimistic!"

"I'm just being realistic. It's possible that they will let us leave this place, but I doubt it would be for anything other than to work as tools for my father."

If your opponent's stance doesn't have any flaws, then you have to make one. I grab the girl by the shoulders and fling her at the assailant, but instead of trying to resist, the girl goes with the momentum and topples into our target, breaking his guard.

Within moments, I have him in a chokehold with the girl facing the other two, who are looking much less sure of themselves now.

"Haha, we make a great team. Anyway, if it's as you say, then that's something to look forward to in the future. My name's Niharu, since I have a feeling we'll be interacting a lot more in the future."

### **Flashback End: Niharu POV**

"Huh, I guess we really did gain our freedom in the end. I was wrong," Kiyotaka admits, almost as if what he's saying is true.

"Oho? You, Ayanokouji Kiyotaka, was wrong? Don't even try."

He turns off the tap, and the sound of rushing water is replaced with silence.

"Well, I did acknowledge the possibility deep down, but I genuinely didn't expect this outcome."

He turns towards me and looks at me in the eyes. In it happening?

"And one of the many things I wanted to try if I gained freedom was, well, this." Instead of finding his sentence, he leans forward embraces me. His warmth is somehow different to the bath water's heat...

---

**Uh, hello. Sorry for disappearing from the face of the planet for a month and a half. In about three weeks, I'm gonna start writing full time again.**

This chapter is a little segue between the cruise and the sports festival, and OMG SEGGS!!!11!1 IT HAPPENED!1! WE DID IT!!!!!!

Makucchibinotsmol, if you're reading this, I hope you're happy with yourself. You wanted this the most.

I almost forgot to mention it, but yesterday they announced the anime 3rd season literally weeks after the announcement for the 2nd season, so we get this entire 1st year adapted. I honestly can't believe it.

"I hope this Kiyotaka likes thighs just like in the canon." - TeLecheaBB

## Volume 5 Chapter 2 - Announcement of the Sports Festival

### Kiyotaka POV

I arrived outside Class D's room just a few minutes before the day's lessons were scheduled to start. Upon entering the classroom, I immediately noticed an unusual mood enveloping the class. A few people greeted me as I entered, but the majority of the students were huddled in groups, urgently discussing something.

One of those groups happened to surround Niharu's desk, which I decided to go to for more information. It included our close friends such as Haruka and Maya, with Ike and Yamauchi squeezing themselves in on the side.

As I approach the table, Haruka quickly grabs my arm and drags me into the circle.

"Kiyoon, what the hell did you do to Class C in that weird exam we did on the cruise?" Without any greetings, she immediately starts interrogating me.

"Hm? Why is everyone acting so guarded today?" I ask, deciding to ignore her question for the time being. Haruka doesn't at all try to hide her dissatisfaction, but doesn't push the topic further.

"Eh? Did you not receive the letter, Ayanokouji?" Ike butts into the conversation.

"He probably didn't check his mail box," Niharu asserts, before directing her attention back to me. "Basically, everyone in Class D got a letter in their mail box. Ryuen has declared a full on war."

I check the mail box every morning, and today was no different. Neglecting a possible source of important information can only be considered as careless. Niharu must've already checked by the time I woke up.

I also didn't expect Ryuen to make a confronting move after being outsmarted twice in a row, let alone one as bold and direct as a war declaration. It's almost like he wants our rivalry to be public knowledge for the whole school to see.

"He never struck me as an opponent to back down after a few defeats. Is that what everyone's worried about?" I ask. Niharu just smirks.

"Duh," Haruka exaggeratedly sweeps her arm around, gesturing to



the state of the students surrounding us. Most of the panic was probably due to Class C's reputation for resolving things with violence.

"...To be honest, I don't really get what all this worrying is about," Maya shyly offers her opinion. "If we have Kiyotaka-kun and Niharu-san leading us, I don't think they can do anything bad to us."

Maya's positive outlook spread to the rest of the group. Kokoro's face lit up with relief before she says, "well, the reason they're declaring war is because these two have already beaten them before!"

"Hey, hey, don't get your hopes up, everyone," Niharu interjected. "We might beat them in the end, but it's nearly guaranteed they'll resort to underhanded tactics while putting up a fight. Remember Sudo's trial?"

Before anyone could continue, Chabashira-sensei entered the classroom, and everyone scuttled back to their seats. She raised an eyebrow in bemusement.

"Is this not a time for celebration? Your performance in the special exams so far a gaining a lot of attention."

Only she would be able to compliment us in such an uninterested manner.

"Those Class C bastards are already sending us threats! This is the second day back, for gods sake!" Sudo nearly summed up the classes thoughts, but from a much more aggressive perspective. A few people nodded their heads.

"I see... That's a problem for you to all figure out. Anyway, there are a few important events happening this semester that I must inform you about," Chabashira-sensei says indifferently.

"Events? Are you talking about upcoming special exams, Sensei?" Hirata speaks up. As always, he asks a question for the students that are slow on the uptake.

"...You could say that. As you know, classes will resume again today. However, there will be extra physical education classes until the beginning of October, as preparation for the upcoming sports festival."

At the words 'sports festival', the gloomy atmosphere suffocating the classroom dissipated in an instant. Sudo, whose glare was scaring his seatmates to the end of their desks, did a 180 and let out a massive cheer.

"Alright! It's finally my time to shine!"

After being looked down upon due to his academic struggles, it seems that Sudo has finally found a way to gain some respect.

"He seems to be lively today," Niharu giggled as she whispered into my ear. "I think he can find a way to be loud about almost

anything."

I could only agree with her statement, as I watched him flail his arms around as a celebration.

"The details of the festival are in these printouts," Chabashira-sensei ignored Sudo's behaviour and began to pass out thin booklets.

"Well well well," Niharu said, showing me the back page. "It looks like we have a chance to beat Class C once and for all."

The page showed details of an examination system, as we expected.

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"Hey, wait! Ayanokouji-kun, Hasegawa-san!" Our attempt to escape the classroom unnoticed was shut down instantly by Horikita.

Knowing what was going to happen next, I turned to face her in resignation. However, Niharu's determination became clear as she grabbed me and forcefully dragged me out of the classroom.

"Did you really have to do that? We could've just answered her questions without making a scene."

My complaints were blatantly ignored.

"That girl can try finding answers on her own. We could babysit her until she can make her own decisions, but that wouldn't be any fun at all," she faked a yawn.

"..."

"Oh, come on! Let's not waste our time on stuff like that. What should we have for lunch?"

Without letting go of me, she dragged me away in the direction of the canteen.

Since last night, Niharu's behavior has changed significantly. Every action she took was backed up by unwavering enthusiasm, and I could be imagining it, but she was walking much closer to me than before.

### **Flashback**

The next thing I knew, Niharu had gently pushed me against the wall of the bath, with her dripping blond hair brushing against my face. For a moment, our eyes made contact, and we sat in silence as she breathed heavily. Then, she hesitantly sat down in my lap, unsure of what to do next.

"Erm... is it okay if you take the lead?"

"Sure."

In one fluid gesture, I swung Niharu around into a position in reverse to the one moments before, with me pinning her down by the shoulders as she looks up at me.

"Do you have any idea how to handle a lady? Hehe." In contrast

to her words, Niharu's eyes are glinting with excitement.

### **Flashback End**

If it was anyone other than Niharu behaving the same way, her actions would make sense. After all, people have the tendency to become increasingly intimate with others that they see as potential mates. However, someone like Niharu wouldn't be swayed by their natural instincts so easily.

"With all the points we stole from Ryuuen on the island, we could eat like royalty for a month!" Her cute grin didn't show any ulterior motives.

"I suppose that's true, but shouldn't we save our private points? They might be necessary for a future special exam."

Niharu sighed in exasperation.

"You're always looking for the best outcome, but I don't think it's worth it if we don't enjoy ourselves along the way. Get what I'm saying? Lets go for the most expensive set on the menu. We can sweat the details of the sports festival later."

She said those words casually, but they struck a deep cord in my heart. Should I be approaching everything from a different way? It had been ingrained in my mind from the beginning of time that nothing mattered as long as you achieve victory.

"Oi, Kiyotaka. Let's hurry and before the tables are all taken!"

There's something special about this girl that I can't explain.

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**Wow, there are a lot of things I have to say. Firstly, this chapter is pretty short since it was mainly made so I could get back into writing again.**

**I know, I have to be the most indecisive and least reliable author on the internet. Delayed, delayed again, announced as discontinued with a different fanfic along the way, and a new chapter out of nowhere. Once I got more motivation to write again, I found out that all the ideas I wanted to put in the new fanfic could've just been put into this one instead.**

**Also, sorry for failing to finish the lemon scene without deleting it and breaking fragile objects in my home. I have almost no dignity, but I have enough to be ashamed of the scenes I almost published. You guys'll have to use your imagination.**

**I can't promise an update every two days like I used to, but I'll keep writing in my free time. Also, I still can't believe this story almost has 70k views. Thanks so much for your support everyone!!!**

**24/8/22**

**I might bring back adding quotes to the afterword again too.**



# Volume 5 Chapter 3 - A Chaotic Meeting

**Class A- 915 Class Points**

**Class B - 728 Class Points**

**Class C - 712 Class Points**

**Class D - 337 Class Points**

**Kiyotaka POV**

The next few weeks went by pretty quickly, with everyone making preparations for the sports festival. Everyone in the class was in high spirits brought on by our recent success on the cruise that left us with about 300 Class Points. Although it's progress, we still have a long way to go.

Today was one of the last days we had left to hone our fitness before the main event happening next week. Unfortunately, while the class was setting up equipment in the school gym, none other than Ryuuken Kakeru burst through the doors.

One by one, the students of Class C entered the gym, glaring at us with contempt. The intimidation tactics, however basic they were, easily worked against the more timid people of our class, and I noticed a few people glancing at me for guidance.

The first person to say a word was Niharu. Instead of getting into a back and forth argument, she went straight to the point.

"I know that you're just gonna say that you're here to scout, so I won't bother trying to kick you out. But can you stop trying to scare my classmates?"

Ryuuken's smirk faltered slightly, Niharu obviously shutting down whatever he wanted to say.

"It's not my fault if those sheep are all scared of me. And you're right, we aren't going to leave until we know everything."

"Uh-uh," she replied lazily. "While you're here, transfer me those points you owe us from XVI contract."

When Ryuuken didn't immediately reply, a few of his classmates turned to him in curiosity. With her work now done, Niharu walked back to my side as the door students of Class C slowly erupted into argument, with many questions being asked and none answered.

"Shall we get started, everyone?" She asked, not glancing at Class C once as everyone else looked at her in awe. Since our class was on the opposite side of the gym, nobody except me was close enough to hear what she said to trigger such a reaction from them.

After not giving anyone an explanation, she prompted Chabashira-sensei to begin the lesson.

Over the last few weeks of physical lessons, Niharu and I have spent most of our time helping our friends train, although Niharu has wasted time by showing off on multiple occasions. Because of this, our reputations in the class went from the best to even better, and our positions as class leaders were now completely sealed.

"Today is one of your last chances to train before the sports festival next week, so make sure you don't slack off," Chabashira-sensei said, deliberately glancing at some of the less motivated students.

"Sensei, can those Class C students really spy on us like this?" Hirata asked, which earned him a few grateful looks. Clearly nobody was enjoying their company.

"As long as they don't break any rules, unfortunately there is nothing I can do," she said with a shake of her head.

For some reason, her wording struck me as odd. Before our recent success, Chabashira-sensei had only acted with indifference, only doing the bare minimum to support the class. Was it a coincidence, or is there a reason behind her change in attitude? Our classmates perceived her reply as almost sympathetic, but that wasn't the case.

By the time Chabashira-sensei had finished going through the lesson material, Ryuuen had managed to get his classmates back under control with the help of a few of his loyal henchmen. Everyone got work while under the malicious gazes coming from the side of the gym.

"Before we start, I need to make one thing clear," I said loudly but calmly, gathering everyone's attention.

"Even though you have Niharu and I backing up the class, that doesn't mean that you can slack off in training. Especially now that Class C is monitoring our every move."

Some may take my words as narcissistic, but they were true. I couldn't help but notice the feeling of complacency creeping into the atmosphere with each passing day, as everyone became increasingly faithful in our abilities.

"We don't think you're invincible," Sudou barked with a hint of contempt in his voice. However, after a moment, his expression morphed into frustration and... apologetic?

"...Ugh, can you come help me carry this box, Ayanokouji?" He asked begrudgingly. The tense moment had passed, and everyone resumed their duties.

"What's this?" I asked him after strolling over. Before replying, he made one final attempt to carry the box next to his waist without my help.

"Argh... dammit..." he grunted with his face contorting from the strain on his shoulders. After a moment, he dropped it with a thud.

"It's a bunch of things that measure grip strength. Chabashira-sensei told me to put them there," he said, pointing towards the center of the gym. Without missing a beat, I lifted it up over my shoulder and jogged to the required destination. The grip strength devices were surprisingly heavy, and I had to commend Sudou for at least lifting it above the ground.

I turned around to find not only Sudou, but also Ike and Yamauchi staring straight at me like goldfish.

"How heavy did we make that box?" Yamauchi whispered not so silently into Ike's ear.

"Wasn't that, like, more than 50 kilos?"

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Ichinose POV

Today is Saturday, only 2 days away from the official beginning of the sports festival. I am proud to say that our class through the past weeks have made major improvements, and no matter what the other classes might throw at us, we are capable enough to beat them. Either way, I can't see a way for them to use underhanded tactics in something like a sports festival.

I'm currently walking to a cafe in Keyaki mall, which is about to hold a meeting between all of the class leaders, according to Hasegawa-san. At first I was surprised at her invitation, and Kanzaki-kun advised me not to go, but I decided to trust them. After all, they did help us in the Zodiac exam.

"Ichinose! Over here!"

As I entered the cafe, escaping from the early morning heat, a voice drew my attention to a certain table to my left. The table stood out for a few reasons. First, all of the students in the cafe sat a safe distance away from the table, and second, it was full of the most prominent students in our year. I couldn't help but feel out of place.

Against the wall, Ryuen-kun sat alone with his arms and legs taking up as much space as possible. On the sides, there were Hasegawa-san and Ayanokouji-kun of Class D, and Katsuragi-kun sitting with a girl called Sakayanagi-san representing Class A.

"Ichinose. This is the first time I've seen you without that loser following you like a dog," Ryuen lashed out. It only took a few seconds before his first insult.

"Good morning, Ryuen," I replied absentmindedly. He didn't say anything else to me, with his attention already turned towards everyone else at the table.

"Don't act like you don't have a bodyguard following everywhere

you go," Ayanokouji-kun said coolly.

"Enough of the verbal fighting. May you explain why you invited us all here today?" Katsuragi-kun chimed in before Ryuuen could retaliate, pulling everyone back to the purpose of the meeting. Sakayanagi-san just watched the scene silently with a sly smile on her face.

"Actually, this whole thing was my idea," Hasegawa claimed and stood up. After pausing to see if anyone would interrupt her, she nodded in satisfaction and continued.

"As you know, this sports festival will be a special exam that includes all years in the competition. Something else that you may know is that with the rewards, even if you achieve the optimal outcome, honestly it won't achieve that much. And don't forget, the only class that can possibly win is us."

I was shocked by her proclamation, and turned to the other side of the table expecting some sort of negative reaction, but to my surprise, not even the highly provocative Ryuuen-kun didn't say a word.

Ryuuen-kun instead sat in silence, seeming to deeply ponder her words. Sakayanagi-san's mysterious smile widened as she started trembling in excitement. Was there something she said that I missed?

"I'm surprised most of you caught on so quickly," she said with an approving nod. Am I missing something?

"I apologise, but I cannot see where you are going with this," Katsuragi-kun seems as puzzled as I am, so it can't be something that was said before I arrived.

"I suppose I can say it in more simple terms for you then," Hasegawa-san said with a playful grin.

"And Ichinose, make sure you listen carefully too."

Uwaa!? I thought I was hiding my confusion really well. Hasegawa-san must be amazing at reading people.

"Hehe... I guess I was seen through..."

"Don't worry about that too much. I guess I should get to the point now,"

Hasegawa-san pointed towards a group of upperclassmen on the other side of the cafe, who were eating and chatting pleasantly without noticing our gazes.

"Those senpai over there are in Class A. How many points do you all think they have?" She asked with a devilish smile.

"Don't forget the possibility that they might transfer most of their points to someone else for emergencies," Ayanokouji-kun said casually, completely summing up my class's financial strategy.

"..."



He obviously wasn't talking about our class, but I couldn't help but feel slightly alarmed at his observation.

"Are you alright, Ichinose-san?" Sakayanagi-san asked kindly.

"Eh!? I mean- of course!" I exclaimed, completely failing to hold composure. Get it together, Honami! It isn't even that big of a deal!

"Are you sure? You look quite pale."

"Shut up, Sakayanagi." Hasegawa-san saved me, but in a surprisingly rude manner.

"What I'm trying to say is that we should all cooperate this festival to destroy the second and third years!"

Silence. Not a single person in the cafe could utter a sound. After Hasegawa-san's loud proclamation, all of the upperclassmen turned around and stared at our table in shock.

"If it's easier for you all, we could just target the second years instead. We already have leverage over the third years, and we could maybe try use that to get their help," she continued as if she hadn't just dropped another verbal bomb.

"Kukuku..."

### **Ryuen POV**

These two devils have once again put me in a dilemma. If I go along with their plans, I might find myself in a corner like all the other times we crossed paths. But if I don't accept, I might find myself in the sights of a gun pointing directly at my skull.

This can also be a once in a lifetime opportunity to fight by their side. Kuku, I can feel the thrill of anticipation building up inside me, who knew there were such interesting people in the world...

### **Kiyotaka POV**

"As the representative of Class A, I will gladly accept your proposal," Sakayanagi said elegantly.

"Huh? What is the meaning of this, Sakayanagi?" Katsuragi wasn't able to agree so readily. She didn't acknowledge his complaints.

"I would also like to announce my complete control over Class A. This boy sitting next to me unfortunately no longer hold any power, and isn't needed in any future discussions," although her posture and mannerisms were full of grace, every word she spoke was also laced with poison.

After she revealed her knowledge of Niharu and I's pasts, she's been sending subtle hints through her henchmen that she wants to fight us, in ways that made it seem like her henchmen don't even know the purpose or contents of her messages.

Such plans require intricate calculations and trust, especially since most of it was done while she was separated from her followers who were on the island. Because of this, we considered the possibility of her declining our offer and actually made plans in

case she did.

Katsuragi seems at a loss for words, unable to find a way to argue against her. Instead, he scanned around the table, trying to find someone who might be on his side. As it turns out, luck is on his side today.

"I would rather not interfere in your class matters, but are you sure you aren't being too harsh, Sakayanagi-san?" Ichinose asked imploringly, with her eyes full of pure sympathy.

"The flat bitch is right. Baldy here has no allies anymore after he got crushed in both exams," Ryuen seems to be on a quest to insult every person at the table at least once before the meeting is over.

"To me, it doesn't matter if he stays or not. I'll see what you have planned, but if I sense a single hint of betrayal, I'll crush all of you," he declared, before promptly leaving the table without looking back.

"What the fuck are you doing?" His voice rang through the room once again, preventing Niharu from drawing everyone's attention back to her. A few of the upperclassmen near the entrance found themselves incurring Ryuen's wrath.

"U-uh..."

"Are you telling your pathetic leader about our conversation? Kuku, it won't make a difference," Ryuen said with amusement, spitting at their feet before finally leaving the cafe, leaving everyone else behind him aghast.

"What he said was right. We wouldn't meet up in such an open space otherwise," Niharu assured everyone in an attempt to keep the conversation on track.

"So, Ichinose, you're the leader of the only class left. Are you in or out?" She asked, even though we already knew the answer.

"Eh?"

It seems like she hasn't yet processed the events that just happened, but to be fair, Ryuen was trying to create as much carnage as possible. We let her gather her thoughts for a moment while the upperclassmen behind her frantically discussed what to do.

"...I'm really sorry, but I don't think I can go along with this, especially if Katsuragi-kun is being left out... maybe we could come to an agreement?" She asked slowly.

"I don't know, what do you think, Kiyotaka?" Niharu gave me a chance to announce the final verdict. Now I have Sakayanagi observing me with curiosity, Katsuragi watching me with caution, Ichinose looking at me with hope and Niharu eyeing me with mock anticipation.

"Although I want to uphold a strong relationship between our

classes, we won't be compromising with our decisions, and unfortunately we are siding with Sakayanagi in this case."

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First of all, 100K READS? I never imagined something like this when I first began writing this story. I'm actually so happy and I feel more motivation to write again, although the last time I said that I didn't update the story for another few months. Thanks so much everyone!!

Once again, I'll try to adapt the story in a completely unique way that I haven't seen from other fanfics also following the main general plot line. I know that I don't reply to many comments, but I promise I read all of them. If you have any requests or suggestions I'll happily take them into consideration.

Also, Once again I didn't reread the chapter for grammatical errors, so there might be a few inconsistencies with things like tense and the word 'your/you're' for some reason.

1st of February, 2023

# Announcement

Hey everyone. I'm sorry to say this, but this will most likely be the final update to this story. I began writing it around the time of Y2V4's release, and updated it like crazy until the end of the zodiac exam. The chapters afterwards were me trying to fight off a writing block and lack of motivation, with updates coming only once every 3 months.

In the end, the writing block overcame me, but I'm inspired to write again. The problem is after rereading the story I'm not 100% satisfied with where the plot went and the quality of writing, so I've decided to start a brand new fanfic.

Again, sorry to anyone who was invested in someone special, and thanks a lot for the support. But now, I want you all to vote for the plot of the next fanfic for me to make.

To vote, like the comment that will be next to the plot of your choice.

## **Aftermath of a reaction fanfic**

Instead of the usual reaction story where everyone sees the Kiyo's plans behind the scenes, it will take place after everything is revealed up to Y2V7, and he has to continue school life while everyone knows his abilities.

## **Another Kiyo X OC/ Crossover**

Basically a story similar to this one but higher quality of writing and a better plot. If you vote for this option, you can also suggest a character, or characters, for me to put in the story.

## **Class E**

I've read many Class E stories, but none of them hold a candle to the original "The True Elites." Im not saying I can write something on par with that story, but I will try to make it have its own twists and good moments.